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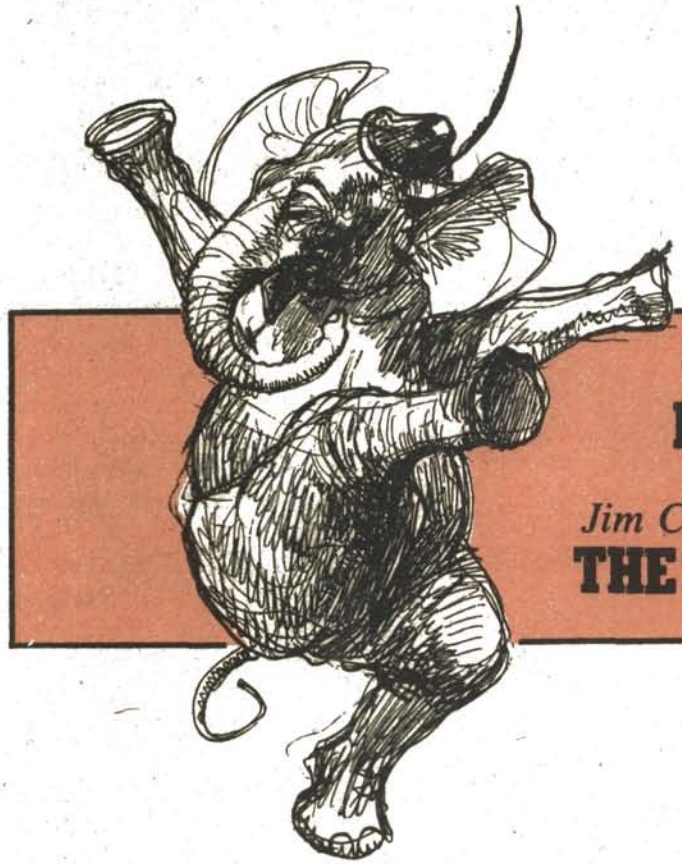
An Exchange of Views
THEOLOGY IN
THE AMERICAS

ONE DOLLAR

NOVEMBER 21, 1980



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The Editors
IN REAGAN COUNTRY

Jim Castelli
THE RELIGIOUS VOTE

Bernard Cooke
Contraception & the synod

Jack Holland
The men on the blanket

Thomas Powers
Using up the president

John Garvey
Church beyond church

Raymond E. Brown
Schillebeeckx's Christ

Robert Howard
Economic democracy

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Correspondence

Bring on the biologists

Newton, Mass.

To the Editors: David Toolan's recent article ["Psychology's Theological Quantum Jump," Oct 10] was for me one of the most stimulating and important you have published in recent months. That is high praise indeed, for you seem to manage a consistently high level of performance along both those dimensions. After reading the article I wondered if Toolan and his readers are familiar with the work of Gregory Bateson, especially with his last book *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, published in 1979. Although Bateson himself says, "I have put the descriptions of sticks and stones and billiard balls and galaxies in one box, the pleroma, and have left them alone," it seems to me after a careful reading of him that he arrives, through the study of "living things: crabs, people, problems of beauty, and problems of difference," at a view very similar to that of the physicists Toolan refers to in his article. It would be interesting to hear from the biologists after such an interesting dip into the world of the new physicists.

MARY JANE FERRIER
Psychologist

Spain in the neck

San Francisco, Calif.

To the Editors: Can this be trusty Colin Westerbeck, parroting anti-Catholic, hispanophobe canards? Alas, yes. Twice he fouls his *Picasso* review [October 10] with casual defamations:

> ". . . that tendency to combine idealization with ravishment, with rage. It is all so very Spanish."

Demented fury is not enough; he must have heroic sadism:

> ". . . all those traits which Catholic Spain bred in its sons expressly for the purpose of repression—traits which were never supposed to be turned loose . . ."

It's not weakness of intellect, birdie (I sighed). It's a cultural kink in his little inside. It's one more insensible surrender to the hostile tradition which for centuries has viewed Spain only through blood-dimmed eyes. It's the good old Anglo linguistic imperialism, which once found home-grown words enough to flatter masculine pretensions ("he-man," "all boy"), but now kidnaps "macho" to ridicule them. It's all those movies, too, all that Buñuel, poor fellow, to confirm his prejudices. In the end, he will have eyes and see not; ears, and hear not.

Ah, well! Autumn will soon lead to Advent and Christmas. Take some time off, Mr. Westerbeck. Put aside for a while what you "know" about the somber Spanish temper, and listen to the *villancicos*. What could be more Spanish, or more Catholic?

Brincan y bailan los peces en el Río,
brincan y bailan al ver a Diós nacido.
Brincan y bailan los peces en el agua,
brincan y bailan al ver nacido el alba.
(The fish jump and dance in the river,
The fish jump and dance to see God is born.
The fish jump and dance in the water,
The fish jump and dance to see the sunrise.)
After that, good hunting.

JULIAN J. IRÍAS

Worker participation

Silver Spring, Md.

To the Editors: One could wish that the management climate in the U.S.A. permitted more experimentation with the kinds of worker participation in corporate decision-making that exist in Europe, as Robert Senser reported so thoughtfully in "Industrial Democracy, Ltd." [Sept. 12].

In Europe management has learned to live profitably with labor organizations whose leaders are dedicated, by and large, to nationalization and democratic socialism. In the United States a growing group of corporate managers is challenging the very existence of the American labor movement whose leaders, by and large, are dedicated to the preservation of private enterprise and opposed to nationalization and socialism.

We can only hope that someday American management will discover that organized labor is one of the system's greatest assets and use it accordingly.

GORDON H. COLE
Senior Staff Associate
George Meany Center for Labor Studies

Milton & devil's party

Sydney, Cape Breton, Canada

To the Editors: Professor Sowell ["Mythstatements?" Correspondence, Sept. 12] is no doubt correct in saying that neither Adam Smith nor Milton Friedman have many good things to say about businessmen. The fact remains that many businessmen have good things to say about Messrs. Smith and Friedman. No doubt they have not read these authors with care.

It might also be unfair to point out that in Great Britain and in Chile, where governments claim to put Dr. Friedman's theories into practice, the failure rate for small businesses has increased dramatically. If this could be blamed on the theorist, there would be even more substance to the assertion that Dr. Friedman has no good things to say about businessmen. Given the distance between abstract models and the concrete practice of economics, these authors should not be blamed for what others think they have said.

(Continued on page 670)

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Contents

Volume CVII, Number 21

Correspondence 642

Editorials 643

Using up the president: *Thomas Powers* 645

The church beyond the church: *John Garvey* 646

Contraception & the synod *Bernard Cooke* 648

The Religious vote: *Jim Castelli* 650

The men on the blanket: *Jack Holland* 652

Theology in the Americas: An exchange of views 654

Art: *Nicolaus Mills* 661

Stage: *Gerald Weales* 662

Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 663

Books

Economic Democracy: *Robert Howard* 665

Christ: *Raymond E. Brown* 666

Joshua Then and Now: *Nancy Yanes Hoffman* 667

Women and Ministry in the New Testament: *Arlene Swidler* 668

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LIFE AFTER REAGAN

A CLEVER DEBATER COULD argue that the 1980 presidential election was a stunning defeat for conservatism. It was, after all, the loser who had defended conventional economics and stressed fiscal responsibility. The winner had championed economic departures that worried the graybeards everywhere, in the economics profession and on Wall Street. The loser had emphasized tax cuts for business, the winner had tilted toward consumers. The loser had appealed for trust in the established patterns of government and for traditional party and group loyalities. The winner had argued for a sharp change of direction and for a reexamination of long-held assumptions in voting. Finally, it was the loser who had stressed the dangers associated with political power, the tight restraint within which the successful statesman had to maneuver cautiously. By implication, and sometimes explicitly, the loser had allowed that many problems were outside of government's control, neither of its making nor within its power to resolve satisfactorily; and therefore it was the loser who had associated himself with modest, if not even pessimistic, expectations for the future. In sharp contrast, the winner had exuded confidence about the management and reform of government. He had articulated a clear and certain theory of the source of our national ills and proposed an equally clear and certain remedy. He had rejected the notion that society suffered from any malaise deeper than that which institutional change could swiftly repair. In the end, it was the winner who represented the most optimistic view of the human—and the American—condition. In short, the candidate whose politics were defensive and cautious was crushed by the candidate whose vision was confident and almost utopian.

That would be a clever case, but it would be wrong. Not much more wrong, however, than the argument that the Reagan victory was a sweeping affirmation of conservatism. Everyone realizes, of course, that elections, as the Caterpillar in Alice's Wonderland would declare, mean what we say they mean. If right-wing PACs and right-to-lifers and Moral Majoriteers can convince the political world that they hold the key to electoral success, then their power is in fact increased by that much, whether or not their claims are truly well founded. Likewise it is all to the advantage of liberals to portray the election as largely a personal defeat for Jimmy Carter. No one's interpretation is entirely disinterested. Nonetheless we think there is plenty of evidence cutting against the view that 1980 was a "conservative tide." Three examples:

● The *New York Times*/CBS poll of voters found "It's time for a change" listed as the chief reason for voting for Mr. Reagan. Thirty-eight percent of the voters leaving polling booths gave this as their main reason or as one of their two main reasons for a Reagan vote. By comparison, only eleven percent checked the explanation "He's a real conservative."

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● Four years ago, 38 percent of the voters identified Jimmy Carter as a liberal, 25 percent as a moderate, and 18 percent as a conservative; 19 percent did not know how to describe Carter's politics. After a term in office, what has happened? Seventeen percent still say they don't know where to place Carter; 24 percent consider him a liberal, 37 percent a moderate, and 22 percent a conservative. In other words, the man that voters rejected was not clearly perceived as belonging to any ideological category, was not perceived as a liberal, indeed was increasingly perceived as a moderate or conservative.

● Seven states had "tax revolt" initiatives on the ballot this November. Despite the Reagan margin and Republican rhetoric about getting government off our backs, six of these initiatives were rejected by the voters.

In 1980 conservatives won and liberals lost. But the election, certainly not at the national level and probably not at the state level either, was not a referendum on conservatism and liberalism. Insofar as the fortunes of those political outlooks rose and fell on election day, it was because of events that had transpired earlier. In the conservative case, their current advantage is owed to their persistent effort to capture the Republican party, and thus control one of the two alternatives the people have. Once the Democrats fell victim to the periodic cry, "Throw the rascals out!" it was conservative rascals—rather than, say, moderates—who were conveniently ready in the wings to serve as replacements. In the case of liberalism, it has been fragmented since 1968. Jimmy Carter patched over that fragmentation momentarily in 1976, but once in office he moved decisively to the right in economics and treated liberal forces as a threat to be neutralized rather than a constituency to be mobilized. Liberalism was defeated in 1980—with Senator Kennedy. It probably would not have won in November, but it couldn't have done much worse.

It is said that today conservatives have all the "ideas." If this is so, we haven't noticed. Conservatives, at least some of them, do have "supply-side economics," an optimistic but untested theory that would have been pilloried as totally irresponsible had it emerged under Democratic sponsorship. But the condemnation of big government as the source of all our woes? More military hardware and strong support for friendly dictators? Doing away with the fifty-five mile-per-hour speed limit, instituting prayer in public schools, discriminating against homosexuals? If these qualify as "ideas," they are neither new nor good ones. What conservatives have mainly produced are effective critiques of programs established under liberal auspices; their own proposals are largely acts of faith in the recuperative powers of unrestrained corporate energies and in the viability of traditional mores.

Conservatism has been boosted far less by ideas than by new strategies that effectively channel emotions. On the one hand, the New Right has worked tirelessly to forge an organizational base out of the frustrations arising from cultural change; on the other hand, the neoconservatives have persuaded politicians like Reagan to assimilate, rather than affront, the symbolic and rhetorical heritage of the New Deal.

Liberalism, it should be admitted, has not much to show in the way of ideas either. And its own symbolic attachment to cultural experiment and the rights of dissenters has often left it identified with expressions of moral insensitivity (at the very least) in an era when taboo-breaking is as likely to be welcomed and commercially exploited as to invite persecution. Organizationally it has become more dependent on "big money" than much of the New Right. It has its work cut out.

Tired of taking the blame for not solving the nearly insoluble, some liberals are now sitting back with satisfaction to await the failures of the Reagan administration: "All right, so you try it!" Unfortunately, the nation and the world cannot afford four more years of either failure or stasis. The pleasure of being ideologically vindicated is not really worth it. It would be nice if, in 1984, when Ronald Reagan's opponent asks, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" people could honestly answer yes. Poor people, that is, as well as the middle-class. And maybe even citizens of El Salvador and Poland, as well as of the U.S.

The odds are against it. Ronald Reagan comes into office facing an enduring economic problem and a deteriorating international scene. His solutions for the former all run up hard against his solutions for the latter. Reagan's economics are, of course, still up for grabs, a surprising fact in view of the importance of the economic issue in the campaign. He could play it straight Republican, i.e., pretty much the way Jimmy Carter has been playing it, with a greater degree of pro-business spin. Or he could follow the Laffer strategy, cutting taxes sharply, postponing a balanced budget, leaving the anti-inflation struggle to the Federal Reserve until the predicted sunrise of productivity simply melts away the inflationary mists. *Business Week* adds up the annual total of Mr. Reagan's promised tax cuts as reaching $275 billion by 1985—more than one-fourth of what would otherwise be the government's revenues. Now this scenario is far-fetched in any case. It is impossible to combine with a burst in military spending that should reach $300 billion in the same year. To be sure, a President Reagan will have an advantage in economic matters that Jimmy Carter spent three years trying to gain—the confidence of the business community. That alone may stimulate some badly needed investment and reduce the inflationary behavior that springs from distrust about the economy's long-term prospects. But a glance at the financial pages suggests that business's confidence in any president, Reagan included, is a limited asset.

There is a way out for Mr. Reagan. Cut arms spending. Make a choice between the theoretical scenarios of the West defenseless before Soviet nuclear weaponry in the mid-eighties—scenarios that are not very persuasive in any case—and the far greater likelihood of Western weakness, demoralization, and internal strife due to prolonged economic crisis. That is the choice West Germany has made in its recent reversal on increased arms spending. That is also a factor in the hawkish *Economist*'s recommendation to Reagan that even effective rearmament demands some arms limitation. In brief: pass the SALT.

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Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

USING UP THE PRESIDENT

THE PROCESS IS ONE OF ALMOST FEUDAL INTIMACY

POOR JIMMY CARTER. There wasn't enough of him to go round. A college friend told me a story recently about a classmate running for Congress in Connecticut. At the moment he's a state senator. Early this year, well before the convention in August, he got a phone call one morning from the White House. "Would you hold on please, senator. The president would like to speak to you. . ."

Our classmate waited. A feminine voice came on the line. "Hello, senator, this is Rosalynn. The president very much wants to speak to you but he just received a call from the president of Pakistan. He's talking to him right now. Can you hear him in the background?"

Rosalynn's voice faded as she held up her phone in the Oval Office, pointing it in the direction of her husband. Our classmate could hear the hollow murmur of the president's voice in the background. Rosalynn's voice returned. "Did you hear him? Can you wait? He should be free in a moment. We'd both appreciate it. . ."

Our classmate said he'd be glad to wait, and a few moments later the president came on the line. "Senator, thank you for waiting. I apologize for the delay, but I felt I had to take the president of Pakistan's call."

"Mr. President," said our classmate, "I think you made the right decision."

Carter then asked our classmate for his support at the convention, which our classmate promised. The entire phone call lasted perhaps ninety seconds. Some weeks later the White House called again and invited our classmate down to meet the president in the Oval Office. He went on the appointed day and spent four or five minutes in the Oval Office. Carter was friendly. The conversation was general. A photographer took pictures, and a copy soon arrived in the mail with the president's signature. That was our classmate's reward for his support at the convention. Hundreds of other delegates must have received similar treatment. It is the office, of course, which gives a president his power, but while he holds the office the power resides in his person. The authority is his. He can delegate it pretty much as he likes, but no document can substitute for his person, time in his presence, words from his mouth. He must ask for support personally, and he rewards it in person. The process is one of almost feudal intimacy.

A president must spread himself around. Lyndon Johnson used to call it "pressing the flesh," and there is a lot of flesh to press. Every president, for example, seems to have his own technique for dealing with the agony of shaking hands. I've never shaken a president's hand, unless you count Eisenhower's, when he was president of Columbia University. I was about eight years old. I don't imagine I squeezed very hard. Others do. It's taken as a sign of manhood. I remember somewhere that John F. Kennedy's hand was often red and swollen at the end of the day. Nixon had a technique of grabbing his greeter's arm with his left hand as a way of reducing the manly squeeze of the greeter's right. A side benefit was the aid it gave him in moving the greeter on. Someone once described to me an Inaugural Ball—I think it was Nixon's—where the new president shook the hands of a long line of notables. A photographer stood by, recording each handsake, so the signed pictures could go out later. The line went on and on. An hour, two hours. The president kept at it, ten or fifteen seconds for each greeter, bestowing a tiny touch of his power and authority with each shake of the hand.

We live in an ancient world, and this is one of the oldest things in it. There is no substitute for the person in which power resides. But there is a vast difference between an Athenian city state and a great modern nation of 250 million people. There are not minutes enough in the day to touch all the bases. Receptions, public ceremonies, official meetings, the signing of bills into law. A president will sometimes use twenty or thirty pens to sign a single bill, so they can be handed out later. I am told there is a man at the Capitol who does nothing all day but run flags up and down the flagpole so they can be given out to people who will say *this* flag flew over the Capitol. A president must spread himself in the same way.

Sometimes the process is fudged. Autograph collectors are going to have a tough time with the auto-pen, which came in with Kennedy, I think. When Lyndon Johnson published his memoirs a special edition included a bookplate with his autograph. The story was that he had signed each and every one personally. One allows oneself to doubt. There are countless thousands of short messages on White House stationery floating around "signed" by recent presidents. But photographs at least can't lie. The president was really there with all those state senators, substantial contributors,public officials, foreign dignitaries, aides and their families, spreading himself around. It goes on all day, every day, and of course the demands for a piece of the president—or of a presidential candidate—are even greater during a campaign.

You could see something of the effect in the photographs which appeared in the morning paper during the campaign—the hollow smiles, baggy eyes, lines of tension about the mouth. The pace of a presidential campaign amounts to a shattering personal ordeal. Theodore White figured that one reason Nixon lost the election of 1960 was his insistence on running his own campaign. He had to *do* the campaigning, but running it was beyond him. He was too tired, harassed, confused, excited, and irritable. A candidate has got to surrender himself like a swimmer caught in a rip tide. He must learn to

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do as he's told, to depend on aides for the names of cities, to read the speeches he's given, to remember the stock answer for every question. Nervous exhaustion must be every president's chronic condition. One remembers the story of the New York doctor who specialized in "vitamin" shots for public figures. The "vitamins" were amphetamines, the raw fuel of nervous energy to penetrate the exhaustion.

A friend told me of seeing Nixon once on Fifth Avenue. This was shortly before Nixon was elected in 1968. My friend said one look was all you needed: the man was crazy. I don't think Nixon was really crazy, but I think I know what my friend saw—a mixture of inner tension with a sense of unreality. During that same election I once covered a fund-raising lunch given for Hubert Humphrey. He talked a mile a minute throughout—at the reception before the lunch, to his luncheon partners, to the assembled guests after dessert was cleared. When he left the building he spotted a small group of construction workers standing near-by—six or eight men in blue plastic hardhats. He sprang over to them with a broad fixed grin, his skin taut and orange in color in the harsh daylight. He pumped their hands—so good of you to come, so glad to see you, very pleased to be here. He grew confused and shook some hands twice. He shook one hand a third time. An aide led him away by the arm but still he turned to wave, the grin fixed. It was alarming to watch. I don't think Humphrey saw anything at all.

A year ago I published a book and made the standard book tour—two or three cities in the northeast, a day or two in each. This was a very curious experience. I sometimes did six or eight interviews in a single day, most of them on radio, from seven in the morning until ten or eleven at night. A sense of unreality slipped down over those days like a shroud. The radio people were all severely particular. An elderly man in Boston, partially paralyzed. A blonde girl in Philadelphia, wearing a shawl and terribly distressed by the subject. A man with a mellifluous voice who'd forgotten I was coming. "I'm a quick study," he said. "Tell me what your book's about." The television people were all sleeker and more distracted. But somehow everybody asked the same questions, and I always gave the same answers, never changing anything more than the inflection of a word. Even the interviewers who were angry with me asked the same questions. One tried to be wounding, to break my composure, to crush my arguments and back me into a corner. His attempts were transparent—he was truly angry—but it had no effect whatever. I had slipped into a kind of fugue state; he seemed far away, just like all the others. Nothing could have reached me at that point, short of an actual weapon. I was exhausted at the end of every day. I could hardly read. I slept badly. The next day was always exactly the same.

I think this sort of experience must be more common than is generally supposed. A bride and bridegroom go through it for the duration of a wedding. College graduates feel it when a big family presses in close, and all the other big families of friends. A funeral can be the same confusion of faces, identical words, floating in through a cloud. One can only surrender to the moment, grant everyone who approaches that piece of the self to which they are entitled by right and occasion. But what is the effect on a president, who is pressed from all directions all the time?

It seems that some grow addicted to the press. Even when they are "alone" they are surrounded by friends, advisors, aides, and cronies. Lyndon Johnson invited people into his bedroom, even into his bathroom. I have read he conducted one official conversation while receiving an enema. That suggests he had conquered the barriers of privacy, and could do in public what others can only do in quiet alone. But I suspect that like other presidents he, too, had been flushed out into the open, that his inner self had been broken up into bits and pieces. Others had to think and feel for him in the quiet of *their* privacy. One looks at a president's tired face and can't help but wonder—so many have taken so much of the substance of the man, a bit at a time, ten seconds for a handshake, ninety seconds on the phone—if there is anything left?

THOMAS POWERS

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

CHURCH BEYOND CHURCH

BISHOPS & THE MAD AUNT IN THE BEDROOM

A GOOD MANY PEOPLE I know are ex-Catholics. For the most part they are decent, ordinarily thoughtful people who, for a variety of reasons, have concluded that they do not need the church. It would be easy to agree with them if the Vatican or the American hierarchy or Catholic teaching on sexual morality were the whole of Catholicism, or even the most important part of it. But as Rosemary Haughton says in *The Catholic Thing*, "Rome is not the church, and, to its chagrin, it never was."

Nevertheless, it is easy to see why people find Rome irritating, irrelevant—even funny, as it certainly is in making a decision to reopen Galileo's case. The best ending of the procedure would be a Vatican declaration that, since its judgment in these matters must always be taken as absolutely binding, final, and true, the accused Galileo Galilei is *still* guilty as charged. In the past the Catholic procedure was to allow Rome's mistakes to fade away quietly, like the morning-after memories of the quarrels at a drunken party; this is what the church did with its approval of the execution of heretics, the doctrine that all non-Catholics are damned, and the condemnation of interest-taking on money. Rome will set a precedent if it formally repudiates a past error; and if it does not

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repudiate this one, or if it tries to talk its way around the central point of its fallibility in matters where it has no special competence, the Vatican will look even sillier than it does having announced the procedure in the first place.

The announcement of Galileo's second chance was made during the synod of bishops. The timing was appropriate: here the bishops were busy reaffirming *Humanae Vitae*'s ban on artificial contraception, something which (given the Galileo precedent) the Vatican will reexamine in a few hundred years, to show its humility, its openness to ideas, its willingness to be self-critical.

There were hopeful moments during the synod. There was talk (no action, however) about allowing divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion; and Cardinal Hume pointed out something that should be obvious to more bishops, but is not. He said that married people should be listened to, where marriage-related issues are concerned, because they are the true ministers of the sacrament, and they alone have received its graces.

This thought might be extended to its logical conclusion: where it comes to marriage, bishops are no more competent to give instruction than married laypeople would be to tell them how to deal with the special problems of celibacy. Our authority does not extend to the lived experience of the vowed celibate. We may have the right to offer tentative suggestions, we may try to be helpful, we might say how it looks from our point of view—but we have no right to pretend final authority in an area where people work daily with a circumstance which is not our own. The same applies to celibates, no matter how highly placed, when they speak of such matters as contraception and the place of sexuality in married life. They simply are not the authorities here—as they were not authorities in the field of natural science, when they judged Galileo to be wrong, with all the authority they now bring to bear upon sexuality.

The disgust of many Catholics with the institution is understandable. But just as there are people who leave the church out of frustration, there are also people who stay despite every encouragement to leave. We might look at their lives for signs of what Catholicism is, beyond its narrower institutional incarnation.

Irish television did a program on the church in Australia, and included an interview with an aborigine woman who had spent most of her life working with poor and drifting young aborigines, the victims of Australian culture. Once, when she attended Mass in a church where she was not known, the priest refused her Communion. After Mass, when she asked him why he had not given her the host, he replied that he could not be sure she was baptized; she pointed out to him that he would never have done such a thing to a white person. The same woman was told by a bishop that a young priest who had done good work with poor aborigines was reassigned because "there are more important things for him to do." She remains Catholic.

I know a woman who had a bad first marriage and had the misfortune to have it witnessed by a priest. Her second, enduring marriage makes it impossible for her to receive Communion. Despite this fact she attends Mass on Sundays and often during the week. It can be argued that she exhibits more of the Gospel than do the safe men who deny her the right to follow the command of Jesus to eat bread and drink wine in his memory. (Are they protecting God from her?) Her charity certainly exceeds theirs, and mine.

There are many other examples of institutional insensitivity: the scorn for marriage implicit in the Vatican's refusal of the request made by many missionary bishops for a married priesthood, as if celibacy were more important than the right of baptized people to receive the Eucharist; the refusal to consider seriously the question of women's ordination; and, most common of all, liturgies and sermons which reflect what seems to be near-boredom with the fact that a man died for us. But people remain because they know there is something more important than any of these things. And the sins of the institution are, frequently enough, reflections of our own. A comfortable layman is not on firm ground when he criticizes bishops for not living more simply. Most of us are as unwilling to engage in serious controversy, no matter how important the subject, as the bishops are.

People remain Catholic because they believe that Jesus is present in the church, despite everything. God's life is shared with people through the sacraments despite the people who administer and receive them. We believe that the God who created the universe is humble enough to be present to us in pieces of bread we can hold in our hands. This is a heartbreaking, terrifying tenderness. The belief that it is real, no matter what bishops do stupidly, no matter how unfaithful we are, gives hope to millions of people.

Bishops at times may seem like a mad aunt who usually keeps to an upstairs bedroom: we hope she'll stay there, but sometimes she insists on coming downstairs, dressed in strange clothes, talking to the guests about Goths and Martians. She may be crazy, but the family has her in common, and she reminds us in lucid moments of things we need to remember. And of course there is more to it than that: bishops have, for better or worse (and it has been better, and it has been worse) usually guarded orthodoxy, and they have made it possible for the sacramental tradition to continue.

The same issue of the *New York Times* which announced the reopening of the Galileo case reported, immediately below that story, the murder of an Albanian Roman Catholic bishop. He had conducted a religious service in a prison camp, and he was battered to death for doing so. These are the strange poles of the church—near-total irrelevance on the one hand, and the willingness to risk death on the other. To look too much toward Rome, and ignore the courage and life which are clearly part of the church in many countries—particularly in countries where Christianity requires courage—is to take far too narrow a view of the church. What Bishop Coba (the only name which filtered through whatever network it takes to get news out of Albania's hell) died for was not the stuff most of us, bishops, priests, and laypeople, worry about.

JOHN GARVEY

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Contraception & the synod

BERNARD COOKE

NOW THAT the bishops' synod on the family is finished, where do Roman Catholics stand on the question of contraception? Not all the statements coming through official or less than official channels were crystal clear; as a matter of fact, many of them were downright confusing. But two things were clear: on important issues such as contraception and divorce there is genuine and growing episcopal concern, and there is no definitive clarity. Despite Cardinal Felici's claims, these issues are not settled, doctrinally or pastorally.

For a brief time after Archbishop Quinn's initial intervention at the synod, describing the widespread disaffection of U.S. Catholics in the wake of *Humanae Vitae*, it appeared that the synod might deal creatively and forthrightly with this major pastoral problem. However, the hope was quickly dashed as the synod shifted from pastoral concerns to measured defense of papal teaching. Yet, the synod (as Toronto's Cardinal Carter was reported to have said) may be a short step forward; for one thing, the U.S. bishops have invited careful discussion with theologians, many of whom they know do not agree with an absolutist approach to *Humanae Vitae*. At the end of the synod, Pope John Paul himself again mentioned the role of theologians, but there was an important shift in their indicated role: they were to help explain why the conclusions already arrived at in papal teaching were true. Of course, no one (including a pope) can alter the intrinsic nature of theology's proper ministry to the church, which is to be a search for further insight and accuracy in the understanding of Christian faith, rather than high-level indoctrination or simple justification of ecclesiastical statements.

So, theologians must responsibly accept the invitation, at the same time that they recognize that other non-episcopal voices need to be invited into the discussion. There is urgency in responding, for some of the reported statements at the end of the synod seem an unmitigated repetition of the "hard line" on acceptance of *Humanae Vitae* and a disregard for Catholics' ability to form a mature conscience. Perhaps one skilled in reading between the lines of ecclesiastical pronouncements can see some nuances, but the general public perception is that the hard-line Vatican position triumphed in the end. Which means that the two catastrophic reactions of U.S. Catholics to Paul VI's encyclical—massive rejection of papal teaching, even by those who continue as "practicing Catholics," and unjustified anguish in millions who feel guilty about "disobeying a church law" even though they judge that they are morally correct in employing contraception—will continue and even be intensified.

Though the publication of *Humanae Vitae* is still quite fresh in our memory, it might be worthwhile to recall some features in the period immediately before and after the letter's promulgation. Because of the impact of "the pill," because Pius XII had injected a key component by agreeing that the *goal* of family limitation could be acceptable, and because of the ferment surrounding the Council, the decade preceding the encyclical was one of rather intense study and discussion. Vatican II, in the section on marriage in *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World) seemed on the verge of handling the issue, but the pope intervened to reserve the matter to himself. Catholics were increasingly uncertain in their conscience; confessors felt unable to provide adequate advice. Often with episcopal encouragement, sometimes by episcopal invitation, groups of theologians (sometimes complemented by medical professionals and couples active in movements like C.F.M.) met to work out some appropriate guidelines. Being involved in several of these, I was particularly struck by one feature: the focus of theological discussion was not (as one might expect) on the morality of contraceptive behavior; rather, it was on the question of papal authority—one wondered what the discussion might be if there were not previous papal statements to defend or explain. Unless I misread the outcome of those very serious, candid, and often painful sessions, we were concluding that the situation was one of *lex dubia*, i.e., there was not enough certainty to impose a clear prohibitive obligation on Catholic consciences.

Then came the encyclical, despite worry by many (including not a few highly-placed prelates) that its appearance would be a disaster. The episcopal reaction across the world, though hard for most in the church to interpret, was and still is of immense theological importance: quite a number of national hierarchies, subtly but unmistakably, interpreted the papal position as less than absolute. These episcopal statements, while accepting papal teaching authority and indicating the careful hearing all Catholics should give to the pope's teach-

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ing, suggested that Catholics should then proceed responsibly to form a judgment of conscience appropriate to their Christian life situation. The importance of this episcopal reaction lies in the fact that all legitimate papal teaching stands, not above or apart from the episcopal college, but within the episcopate's witness to the Gospel. During the past few years, under constant Vatican pressure to endorse and enforce an absolutist acceptance of *Humanae Vitae*, most hierarchies have not clearly reiterated their earlier explanations but neither have they repudiated them. As for practical grass-roots acceptance of the encyclical, Archbishop Quinn's description at the synod applies to much more than the U.S. church.

Today, after the recent synod, all of us must enter into a frank exchange of understandings so that the pastoral concerns, so obvious at the synod, can find expression in resolving what is still an intolerable and unnecessary situation in the Catholic church. At the risk of being too simple, certain things need to be said sharply and candidly, so that they can be discussed openly and directly. Definite positions need to be taken on key elements of the question, so that fruitful disagreements can emerge and a shared learning process ensue.

First—and there should be little dispute about this—we are not dealing with church *law*; the encyclical is not a disciplinary decree. In the question of the morality or immorality of certain sexual activity, papal statements can only be *explanation*. A given use of contraception is itself morally right or wrong, independent of anything a pope says. Regarding contraception, Catholics are not in a position of moral judgment essentially different from other humans, except for their obligation to learn from the church's guidance. An important corollary of this is the need for Catholic reflection to take serious account of judgments by sincere and theologically-educated non-Catholic Christians. The pope can, of course, *teach* that "artificial" contraception is never morally acceptable; this is precisely what has happened. And if he so teaches, Catholics must examine carefully the nature and the content and the context of the teaching. Catholic theologians must, in a special way, examine to what extent the pope's teaching in this respect is an exercise of his distinctive ministry and authority in the church.

Second, the teaching on contraception in *Humanae Vitae* is not beyond question; actually, it needs to be questioned. Despite the pastoral ring of synodal rhetoric, it is really an affront to reflective Catholics who do not agree with an absolutist position on the encyclical to suggest that, though they are obviously wrong, they can be forgiven for not living up to the ideals of church teaching. In the period preceding the encyclical's publication the kinds of arguments used by Pope Paul VI proved inconclusive to a very large group of the church's most competent moral theologians. And Paul VI admitted in the encyclical that his view ran counter to that of the majority in his own specially appointed study commission. These arguments do not become more probative by being included in a papal letter.

In the period immediately following the issuance of *Humanae Vitae* moral theologians muted their criticisms of the encyclical's content; for the most part they were content to stress that the encyclical was *one* of the elements that Catholics had to consider in making their personal moral judgment. However, now may be the time to examine carefully and in depth the encyclical's moral reflection, to assess the intrinsic accuracy of its reasoning, and to see how much of it really pertains to the proper role of papal teaching.

A very tentative agenda for such study might embrace the following questions: What are the elements of *doctrinal* teaching in the letter, i.e., those that belong distinctively to the pope's episcopal role? What is the degree of faith assent that Catholics owe to each of these doctrinal elements? How close does each of them stand to the center of Catholic faith and belief? Then, how do these elements enter into the prudential reasoning regarding a decision of contraception? And since such a reasoning process includes other and non-doctrinal understandings, what is the grounding for the position taken by the encyclical on these points?

This raises, thirdly, the underlying issue of teaching authority in the church. In the matter of contraception, where one is dealing with a pragmatic decision conditioned in each instance by many factors, it would seem that a number of voices need to be heard—and each voice has its own specific authority. Important as their authority is, the bishops are not by themselves the church, nor can they (and *a fortiori* the pope) by themselves speak for the church. Such is the clear implication of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*. There is, therefore, a need to broaden—certainly with accurate analysis and respect for the deepest traditions of the church—the scope of the term *magisterium*. This is not a new suggestion in theological circles, but the matter needs to be brought into open public discourse.

Fourthly, the recent synod has done nothing to change the intrinsic situation of Catholic couples' choice regarding contraception. Catholics surely must (as the synod mentions) honor what is one of the most basic principles in all sexual morality, the link of sexual activity to the nurture of life. However, this principle finds many applications beyond the biological: with greater recognition of the love between man and woman as a primary goal of Christian marriage, sexual expression of that love can and should be seen as most importantly life-giving because it deepens the personal life of the two individuals. Moreover, if Christian reflection in a given case leads to a decision to limit the number of children, the couple must be morally sensitive to the most appropriate means. However, "artificial" as applied to means may well find more than a biological dimension—taking marital intercourse as an integrated and highly personal human activity, as making love rather than breeding, previous classifications of "natural" or "artificial" are inadequate and inappropriate. Actually, loving sensitivity to one another as persons probably is the best norm to guide Christian spouses in evaluating any of the aspects of their sexual partnership.

Practically, what should Catholic couples now do? Precisely what many have already done: as practically and idealistically as possible decide what size family is appropriate for them, how best for all concerned carry out this decision, and then with freedom of spirit get on with the basic task of trying

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to mature as lovers and parents. In all this they owe it to themselves to listen to and learn from the teaching of modern popes, but the final moral judgment is something no one can make for them.

Finally, the bishops in their pastoral concern owe it to their fellow-Christians to make clear an important distinction. Even if they do really agree with the teaching contained in *Humanae Vitae* and wish to voice that agreement, that does not necessarily mean that they see the pope's position as the only correct Catholic judgment of conscience in all cases. As bishops they have responsibilities to their fellow-bishops, especially to the bishop of Rome; but their primary responsibility is to their people. These people deserve to hear their bishops defend clearly the right and responsibility and *ability* of mature Catholics to form their consciences regarding their own married life.

AN HISTORIC DEGREE OF INFLUENCE & INVOLVEMENT

The religious vote

JIM CASTELLI

IS THERE ONLY one "Christian" position on political issues like the creation of the Department of Education? Can God hear Jews pray? Was America founded as a "Christian Republic"? Is it a sin for Catholics to vote for candidates who support government funding of abortion?

These were only some of the questions raised in the 1980 national elections, which featured an historic degree of religious influence and involvement. There were historic shifts in religious voting patterns—especially among Catholics and Jews—in this year's presidential election, but most polling data indicate that these shifts reflect widespread national frustration and desire for a change rather than any deep ideological mutation.

Reagan made the best showing among Catholics of any Republican in more than fifty years. He drew 48 percent of the Catholic vote, compared to 43 for Carter—a 14-point drop since 1976 and the worst showing by a Democrat in memory—and 9 percent for Independent candidate John Anderson.

Other Republican presidential candidates have received higher percentages of the Catholic vote. Dwight Eisenhower received 49 percent, to Adlai Stevenson's 51 percent, in 1956. Richard Nixon outpolled McGovern 52-48 percent among Catholics in 1972. But Reagan's five-point margin over Carter was slightly larger than Nixon's margin over McGovern.

Among Catholic ethnic groups, Reagan won a majority of Irish-, Italian-, German- and French-American Catholics, while Carter led among Hispanics and Polish/Slavic Catholics.

At the same time, normally Democratic Catholics this year virtually mirrored the general electorate, which gave Reagan 51 percent of the vote, Carter 43 and Anderson six. This strongly suggests that Catholics voted on the same issues as other Americans—dissatisfaction with inflation, unemployment and the Iranian hostage situation, a symbol for America's inability to make the rest of the world do what it wants it to do.

Two Catholic single-issue constituencies were again hard at work in 1980—the anti-abortion groups and the Catholic school lobbies seeking tuition tax credits for parents of students in private elementary and secondary schools. Both groups favored Reagan and, in all but a few instances, conservative Republican congressional candidates. There are no signs that either issue in itself swung Catholics to Reagan, but both contributed to an atmosphere that created the Reagan-Republican sweep.

A poll of Catholics in twelve key congressional districts taken for LIFEPAC, an anti-abortion group, in September, found Carter and Reagan neck-and-neck, but indicated that Catholics saw little difference between the two candidates on abortion. Eighty percent of those surveyed opposed federal funding of abortion, as do both Reagan and Carter, while a majority support legal abortion in some circumstances, a view closer to Carter's than to Reagan's.

The American bishops, widely accused of tilting toward Ford on the abortion issue in 1976, were intentionally quiet as a body this year. There were no meetings with the candidates and only one token denunciation of the Democratic plank favoring legal abortion.

Cardinal Humberto Medeiros of Boston attracted national attention two days before a local Democratic primary when he virtually called it a sin to vote for candidates who support abortion funding. His comments were clearly aimed at two Democratic candidates—Barney Frank, a Jew, and James Shannon, a Catholic. Both candidates won their primary and general election campaigns.

Another bishop—Leo Maher of San Diego—told area Catholics it would be a sin to vote for Tom Metzger, the Ku Klux Klan leader who had won the Democratic nomination for

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a congressional seat. It became the neoconservative conventional wisdom to charge liberals with hypocrisy for attacking Medeiros and not Maher, although there was a clear difference in the respective candidates' approach—Frank and Shannon never espoused abortion as quite the social good Metzger found in racism.

Archbishop John Whealon of Hartford denounced the Democratic party in a column in his archdiocesan newspaper and other Connecticut bishops joined him in a statement urging Catholics to vote against candidates supporting abortion. Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, who has never tried to mask his contempt for Carter, breakfasted with Reagan during the campaign and denounced Carter—over abortion and tax credits—before 250 archdiocesan priests the next day.

Carter, who promised in 1976 to support constitutional tax aid for private schools, has frequently been denounced by Catholic leaders for his later opposition to tuition tax credits, a plan he called wasteful, inefficient, and unconstitutional, the latter judgment all but certain to be shared by the U.S. Supreme Court. Reagan, acting partly on the advice of Don Shea, a Catholic priest working for the Republican National Committee, backed tax credits to appeal to both Catholics and evangelical Christians supporting their own schools.

Shea was assisted by Leonard DeFiore, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Washington, who took a leave of absence to work on Catholic issues for Reagan. DeFiore created a minor uproar within his own archdiocese when local and national black Catholic groups called for his dismissal. Archbishop James Hickey defended DeFiore's right to take a leave—he said he would have granted similar leaves to archdiocesan lay employees seeking to work for Carter or Anderson—but a spokesman for Hickey conceded that DeFiore hadn't used the best judgment when he used official archdiocesan stationery to explain his decision in a virtual campaign letter sent to every teacher and principal in the archdiocese and every bishop and Catholic school superintendent in the country.

Reagan also received a boost from Father John Meyers, president of the National Catholic Educational Association, who sent out—and publicized—three letters during the campaign. One criticized the make-up of a federal advisory committee on education and warned Carter that Catholics might have to look elsewhere than the Democratic party for support; one praised Reagan for his support of tuition tax credits and one congratulated a senior in a Catholic high school in Texas for asking Carter about tax credits during a town meeting.

There is no polling data on the impact that tuition tax credits might have had on anyone's vote, and election day exit polls indicate that abortion—like the Equal Rights Amendment—was low on a list of issues that concerned voters as they entered the polling booth. But in an election when people seemed to be voting to get theirs, tuition tax credits offered an extra bonus to parents of the twenty-five percent of Catholic students in parochial schools. And abortion was one of the issues emphasized by New Right groups like the National Conservative Political Action Committee to manipulate public opinion during the campaign.

The New Right didn't create the major causes of public discontent—OPEC oil prices, Iran, high mortgage rates, unemployment—but it fed that discontent, created an atmosphere of distrust and hatred and offered voters an outlet to vent their feelings by giving them someone to vote against.

The New Right fathered the Moral Majority movement—subject of widespread media attention this year. New Right activists Howard Philips, Ed McAteer, and Bob Billings—a fundamentalist minister who later worked on Reagan's campaign—recruited television evangelists like James Robison and Jerry Falwell to develop New Right organizations that were specifically "Christian." Robison's Religious Roundtable, Falwell's Moral Majority and the west-coast Christian Voice focused on fundamentalist Christians and, to a lesser degree, on Catholics, Mormons, and Orthodox Jews—in an effort to put right-wing politicians in office.

The New Christian Right was a factor in some close victories—particularly those of Jeremiah Denton in Alabama and Don Nickles in Oklahoma, both Catholics. But at this point it seems the New Christian Right rode rather than created the anti-incumbent, anti-Democrat, anti-liberal wave that dominated the 1980 elections.

Reagan wooed this evangelical vote and succeeded in his desire to attract evangelicals without scaring away moderate voters, particularly Catholics and Jews. A considerable backlash against the New Christian Right emerged in the six weeks before the election, but Reagan managed to put just enough distance between himself and the Jerry Falwells. Carter drew about 40 percent of the evangelical vote in 1976, a high figure for a Democrat in recent years. But this year that percentage dropped to 32 percent, with Reagan getting 64 percent. Still, Reagan led Carter by virtually the same margin among more liberal Protestants, again reflecting the national trend in the 1980 election.

Reagan won 35 percent of the Jewish vote, two points higher than Nixon scored in 1972, but the balance did not go to Carter. He received 47 percent, with 17 percent going to John Anderson, who drew a significant amount of support from Jews throughout his campaign. The election indicated that while Jews were far from enamored of Reagan, they were reassured enough that he did not want to make America a "Christian Republic" that a majority did not vote for Carter out of fear of the Moral Majority influence.

Religious leaders did speak out on issues like SALT II, arms control, aid to the cities, help for the poor, and foreign aid in this year's election. But those words were for the most part buried in an avalanche of selfishness and manipulation in the guise of religion. Before mainline religious leaders—Catholic, Protestant and Jewish—could address issues of justice and peace, they had first to defend their right to disagree with a handful of highly visible, independent fundamentalists claiming to find biblical justification for opposing the Panama Canal Treaties. When historians look back on the massive involvement of religion in the 1980 elections, they are likely to conclude that it was not religion's noble side that we saw.

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NEWEST CHALLENGE TO ULSTERIZATION

The men on the blanket

JACK HOLLAND

"THEY WERE AGED twenty-one and twenty-two, as I afterwards learned, serving ten and twelve years respectively. When the cell door opened they both looked frightened and looked anxiously at us for a moment. They were pallid and naked except for a blanket draped over their shoulders. They stood silently, fear hardening into defiance, I felt, as we looked at the cell.

"It was covered with excrement almost to the ceiling on all four walls. In one corner there was a pile of rotting, blue molded food and excrement, and the two boys had evidently been using bits of their foam rubber mattress to add to the decor as we entered. There wasn't much of a smell but the light was dim and the atmosphere profoundly disturbing and depressing. I felt helpless and angry as I stood and looked at these appalling and disgraceful conditions, prevented by bureaucracy and by history from talking to two of my fellow human beings who had brought themselves and been brought to this condition of self-abnegation."

So wrote Tim Pat Coogan, the editor of *The Irish Press*, in his recently published book about prison conditions in Northern Ireland, *On the Blanket*. He is one of the few outside observers ever permitted to visit that section of Northern Ireland's Maze Prison know as H-Blocks 3, 4, and 5. There, for the last three years, between three hundred and four hundred prisoners, mostly members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, have been resisting the attempts of the prison administration to treat them as criminals. They claim they are not ordinary criminals but political prisoners whose actions were motivated not by greed or murderous intent but by the political goal of driving the British out of Northern Ireland and creating a united Ireland.

Another observer allowed in to witness the conditions in the H-Blocks was Cardinal O'Fiaiach, the Catholic Primate of all Ireland. He issued a statement shortly afterwards in which he said:

> Having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison I was shocked by the inhuman conditions prevailing in H-Blocks 3, 4, and 5, where over three hundred prisoners were incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions. The nearest to it I have seen was the spectacle of homeless people living in sewerpipes in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some of the cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered around the walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting.

The cardinal's visit was in July 1978, when many of the prisoners had already been on the protest for eighteen months. Now, two years later, the British are still refusing to concede to the prisoners' demands to be treated as political not criminal offenders; and the prisoners are steadfastly refusing to wear prison clothes, do prison work, or in any way accept the status of common criminals. The resulting stalemate has produced the toughest problem the British government has had to cope with in its recent troubled administration of Northern Ireland. Most recently some of the prisoners have escalated their protest with a hunger strike. A hunger strike, combined with the horrendous squalor in which the prisoners live, carries the real possibility of a number of deaths, which in turn would only lead to more widespread and embittered violence throughout Northern Ireland.

THE HISTORY OF England's relationship with Ireland is in one very important sense a history of prison protests like the one currently taking place in the H-Blocks. As long as the Irish have resisted the colonialization of their country by England, imprisoned members of Irish terrorist groups have fought to have themselves acknowledged as political, not criminal prisoners. And England, of course, has resisted such an acknowledgment, which would be tantamount to admitting that there is a justifiable cause for struggle, for violence.

Occasionally, however, the British have made concessions to Irish prisoners which amounted to such an acknowledgment. In May 1972 a group of imprisoned Provisional IRA men went on a hunger strike to demand "political status"; this demand entailed that the prison authorities recognize the prisoner's right to wear his own clothes, to associate freely with other imprisoned members of his organization, to refuse to do prison work, and to receive extra visits and extra food parcels regularly. In 1972 the Provisional IRA were at the peak of their strength; their hunger-striking members were near to death when the government conceded, afraid that the security forces would be unable to contain the upsurge in violence expected if

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they died. Political, or "Special Category" status, was granted to the Provisionals (and, incidentally, to the jailed Protestant loyalist terrorists).

Four years later a Labor government abolished such privileges for any prisoner convicted of a crime after March 1976. From then on all prisoners, regardless of motivation, or membership in any terrorist guerrilla group, were to be treated like ordinary criminals. (The British referred to the latter as "O.D.C.'s": Ordinary Decent Criminals.) The Labor government was attempting to characterize the violence in Northern Ireland as nothing other than gangsterism. Its overall policy, known as "Ulsterization," was intended to dispel the view that the problem was a political one. It was a strategy aimed at giving back more and more security responsibility to the largely discredited Northern Ireland police. And, after all, it was only appropriate that the police deal with "criminals."

The government's response to anti-H-Block protests is in line with this policy. British authorities point out with great emphasis that the prisoners are convicted murderers, bombers, bank robbers, and so on. The current figures show that the protesting prisoners have been responsible for some 50 murders, 35 attempted murders, 108 explosive offenses, and 80 firearms offenses. The authorities also claim that the conditions the prisoners endure are self-inflicted in the sense that they stem from their refusing to cooperate and they could at any time alleviate their suffering by cooperating. Any criticism of British behavior towards the protesters is met by these rejoinders.

However, when considering the government position it is well to remember several factors. The nature of the offense is hardly an argument against claims of "political" status. If it were, one would have to deny the legitimacy of violence as a method of political change under any circumstance. Of course, a government does do this when violence is directed against its organs. But this is a tactic within the realm of propaganda and should not be mistaken for a universal moral principle.

The authorities can also be questioned from another angle, a purely legal one that looks not to the nature of the offenses so much as to the nature of the forensic methods used to obtain convictions. The *Sunday Times* of London published figures in 1977 which showed that over 90 percent of those tried in Northern Ireland courts during the mid-1970s were convicted; of those, over 80 percent were convicted on the strength of confessions alone. This compares with a rate in normal United Kingdom courts of between 50 and 60 percent. I say "normal" because the Northern Ireland courts are special courts; they are non-jury courts where judgment is delivered by a single judge under special legislation known as the Emergency Provisions Act, made law in 1973. Under this legislation, provisions allowing for the admissibility of statements are much less strict than the provisions existing in English common law. In other words, the law has been specially arranged in Northern Ireland so that confessions can become acceptable evidence with an ease which has alarmed lawyers and led to several inquiries. Amnesty International in 1977, and a British committee in 1978, found that brutality was used regularly to obtain confessions which in turn led to convictions.

The special courts, the special legislation, the special methods used to obtain confessions, and the special concessions made to allow those confessions as evidence, point to a special situation which is not an ordinary criminal one. This alone would tell the world that the British government is not being candid or even consistent in its arguments that the Provisional IRA are just ordinary criminals and therefore not deserving of "special" i.e., political, status.

As to the conditions the prisoners endure, they can be described as self-inflicted only if one accepts the contention that passive resistance is a form of self-imposed suffering and, therefore, that the authorities are not to blame for the miseries endured by the protesters who use this method. (When Gandhi's followers, pursuing their program of satyagraha in South Africa, lay down in front of trains to protest the exploitation of their fellow Indians, would they have been accused of self-inflicted death—suicide—had they been killed?)

RESISTANCE TO the Ulsterization policy has been passive in the prisons. It began when Provisional IRA prisoners refused to wear prison clothes. The authorities retaliated by removing the mattresses and beds from the cells as well as any reading material. All that was left in the cell was a chamber pot until 8:30 p.m. when mattresses were returned. The prisoners claim that when the wardens came around with trolleys to pick up the slops in the morning they dumped the full chamber pots over the cells. The prisoners refused to clean up and began throwing the excrement out the cell windows. These were boarded up. So the prisoners began to daub it on the walls of the cells. "We had to put it somewhere so it was better on the walls than the floors," Coogan quotes one ex-prisoner as saying. The cells are power-hosed a few times a month. The prisoners dread these as they claim they are beaten when moved from the cells during the cleaning operations.

Prisoners are kept locked in their cells twenty-four hours a day naked except for a blanket wrapped around them (hence the term "blanketmen"). Sunday Mass is the only chance they

D. Lyons Gallagher

Burial Garb

Why do we dress them up
To lay them to rest,
The ones we know best naked
Or nestled in faded quilts.

The ones who rested
Comfortably in our arms,
In sweaters with elbows worn through,
Smiled at us beneath unruly bangs.

Everytime it snows
I wish I'd burned that
Pin striped suit, uniform
Of the work that killed him.

He'd rest more easy,
I know, in the old, warm
Red Woolen shirt he wore
In youth, courtship and rocking cradles.

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have of getting out for an hour or so. Visits are restricted to one a month. But even these have become a source of anxiety because of the kind of examination the prisoner must endure before and after each visit. He is hauled upside down so that his back passage can be probed with long tweezers, or he is made to squat naked over a mirror for the same purpose. Many are so humiliated by this that they prefer not to have the monthly visit at all.

There are further humiliations. The prison orderlies (prisoners themselves) are responsible for much of the day-to-day running of H-Blocks. All the orderlies are convicted Protestant terrorists in jail for serious crimes—including murder—against Catholics. The protesting prisoners are Catholics and completely vulnerable to the animosities of their sworn enemies.

Outside, the reaction has been far from passive. Republican terrorist organizations have murdered twenty wardens over the last few years. There have been numerous protest marches throughout Ireland. Statements have been made by the Catholic church, liberal politicians, human rights organizations, left-wing Labor members of parliament and U.S. members of Congress, calling for concessions from the British government and asking that it recognize the prisoners' claims. Most recently Daniel Berrigan visited Belfast with a delegation of clergy and attempted to visit the H-Blocks but was refused. After he was denied permission he said: "Clergy are supposed to have access to prisons, so clearly these prisoners are a special case. We wonder if it is because they want the truth hidden of the inhuman treatment these prisoners are suffering."

In September a group of ex-prisoners who had been on the protest visited the United States illegally to publicize the awful conditions in the Maze, and in the women's prison in Armagh, where forty female inmates are now protesting the denial of political status. So far, however, the only sign of movement from the British government has been a partial concession to the prisoners' refusal to wear prison uniforms. The authorities offered to have civilian-type clothing supplied to all prisoners, political and otherwise, in Northern Ireland, but this concession was rejected by the protesters. At the end of October a number of the "blanketmen" began a long-threatened hunger strike; another 142 prisoners joined them a few days later, with every prospect of a further escalation of the protest.

The government refusal to acknowledge the political status of the prisoners is symptomatic of its general approach to Northern Ireland, treating it as a "law and order" problem while merely tinkering with temporary measures. Until the authorities abandon this narrow-sighted and politically dangerous view, which has helped create the present inhuman state inside the prisons, there is little chance of that crisis ending.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Theology in the Americas

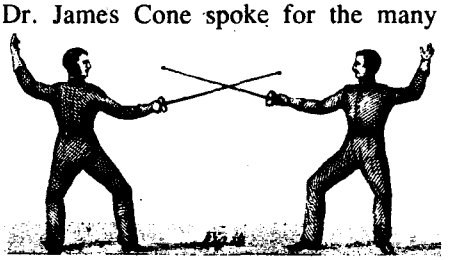
More like a 'happening'

Waltham, Mass.

To the Editors: Although I have deep respect for Peter Steinfels's writing ability and perceptive social analysis, I think it would have been wiser if the report of the Theology in the Americas Conference ["Name Your Socialism," Sept. 12] had been written by someone who attended it. As one who attended both Detroit I and Detroit II, I found these conferences more like "happenings" than typical conferences.

Steinfels placed entirely too much emphasis on the background document (which was seldom referred to at the conference) and to the intentions of the organizers (which had little impact on the flow of the conference).

The reason why the ethnic/feminist groups did not seize upon the unifying theme of a "socialist alternative" was less related to a fear of being manipulated by the conference organizers and more to a concern for "particularity" in understanding liberation motifs. That is, Blacks, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and feminists were not willing to dissolve individual differences under any rubric of universal oppression or universal liberation. Black theologian Dr. James Cone spoke for the many groups when he noted that even though there are universal dimensions to oppression, there is a need to recognize that victims are particular people who are "not all in the same boat."



At Detroit II there was a genuine search for political-economic alternatives. One marked contrast, however, was the rich cultural ethos (including a sense of humor) of the ethnic groups compared to the rational, humorless slogans of white participants who stressed "socialist alternatives."

For most participants, the issue is not whether a socialist alternative should be explored, nor whether the present political economy should be defended. The real issue is that the construction of any political-economic alternative has to recognize the particularity (or social/

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cultural ethos) of each group prior to blurting out universalized slogans.

As long as Theology in the Americas is governed by a majority of ethnic/feminist groups (which is precisely what the structure adopted in Detroit II allows), I would not share Steinfels's concern about TIA offering uncritical support for socialism or any other kind of political-economic alternative.

NORMAN J. FARAMELLI

A learning experience

Heath, Mass.

Unlike Peter Steinfels, I did attend the Theology in the Americas conference in Detroit. . . .

For me, the conference was a deeply stretching, moving, troubling, learning experience. I ran the gamut of joy, anger, outrage, sadness, rejection, reconciliation, challenge, and laughter. . . .

Arriving at the conference, I entered a large, noisy dining room, and was startled to find it peopled by friends extraordinarily dear to me, gathered from the far corners of the American world, both north and south. I hadn't believed that, short of a conference on the far side of the pearly gates, such a coming together was possible—worker priests from Peru; nuns from Denver; seminary students from all over; feisty feminists from the east, west, north, and south; community organizers from Appalachia, Minnesota, California; Black, White, Asian, Hispanic seminary teachers; ordinary workers, secretaries, judicatory staff members—people united in a life-long shared struggle for human justice in the name of the Christian church.

To be sure, the conference verbal diet was too rich—panel after panel of challenge, diatribe, scholarly analysis, political confrontation. . . . Anger, outrage, bitterness from people of color and women. We whites were there to hear and take it all. Too much to take in, too much to feel.

We wanted to say "We know, we know"—but kept realizing we *didn't* know, needing to be reminded that if one is of color, one is of color forever, in a world of white power, never fully protected against the next subtle, or razor-sharp, jab of discrimination. Or female forever, in a world of male power. . . .

Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Native Americans came together in a single caucus. I had long been aware of the widely divergent worldviews of these groups, and marveled at their ability to unite. . . .

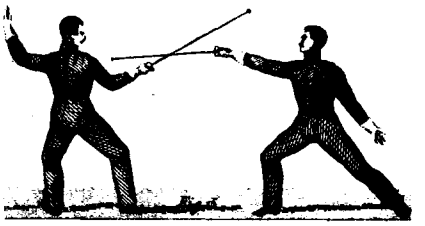
Because I was white, I was excluded, was not welcome. The plunge from my initial intense joy at this gathering of like-minded co-strugglers for justice, to this clear-cut exclusion, wrenched my soul. It was not right. Yet for now it must happen.

Liberal, caring, white male friends, who had experienced this exclusion before, said to me "We must go with whatever they decide; we must give wholehearted trust to the people of color." I replied, "Not me. I pick and choose. I don't give whole-hearted unanalytical trust to anyone. I can love and care, but trust is something else. I need to know *who* people are, *what* they value, *how* they treat their women folk, *what* they think of the American economic system, *how* they act out their beliefs. I can care about people, but I'll trust them when I know who they are and how they act. I would not trust persons simply because they are white. Nor would I trust them simply because they are not white. Mindless trust is not only patronizing. It's stupid."

In retrospect, I found the people I trusted best were the people I knew, and had learned to trust; that those about whom I felt most uneasy were those I knew the least.

The "people of color" returned from their caucus with demands for majority control of TIA—control in numbers of ethnic people on the board and staff, which of course meant financial control as well. I was surprised that I did not feel this was asking too much. It seemed right that, in an organization whose goal is justice for the poor, and in a nation whose poor are for the most part people of color, a majority of the board and staff of TIA should be people of color. There should, however, be a place for whites as well.

I did, nevertheless, feel picky about who those ethnic representatives might be. I cared that they not simply be upwardly mobile clergymen of color who were well on their way to getting their piece of the American pie. I cared that there be good strong feminists on the staff and board, along with people with a keen eye for theological and systemic analysis. . . .



Deep cleavages, mistrusts, and angers mysteriously softened, smoothed over, and were healed the last evening when wine and Puerto Rican music swept us into gaiety and dancing. One didn't say "Oh no, I can't dance." One simply danced. Everyone danced.

We left the conference amidst flying rumors. "The whole conference had been taken over by the left." "The C.P. had taken over the labor dialogue." These seemed to come from some of those unidentified people Peter Steinfels must have interviewed, and from parts of the Black caucus. More rumors. . . . "The conference had been taken over on the contrary, by middle class Black clergymen." . . . These from anxious white feminists. "The entire TIA staff would be out of work by next week" . . . and so on. All rumors. We left, willing to wait and see. . . .

On the plane home, a young professor of marketing from a Pennsylvania university sat by me, reading *Playboy*'s interview with Professor Shockley (the Stanford University electronics engineer who won the Nobel prize for his invention of the transistor). Mr. Shockley fancies himself an authority on Black intelligence. His thesis maintains that Blacks are by nature genetically inferior. The professor beside me commented "You have to take this man seriously. You realize, he won the Nobel prize." Back to the real world. Back to the white world we all live in.

The process of seeing the conference in perspective was already under way . . . Tirades against racism, sexism,

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exploitation are hard to take all in one place in five concentrated days. But when that racist reality is absorbed into our consciousness and we take it back into that work-a-day white world, we see that world with new eyes, new sensitivities, new awareness. Though we may have been excluded physically from that "people of color" caucus, we have become a part of that "people of color" awareness. . . .I do believe, however, major forward steps were taken in the joining together of those very divergent ethnic groups, and I hope the ethnics, the women, and the whites chosen for the staff and board of TIA will be people who have the keen, critical, analytical eye necessary to effect social and political change.

SYDNEY THOMSON BROWN

Set the record straight

New York, N.Y.

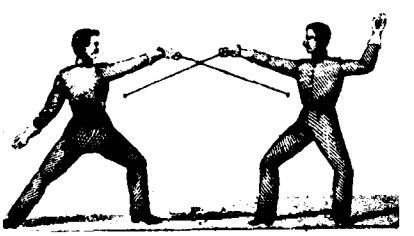
To the Editors: It is unfortunate that the fine analytical powers and intellectual fair play displayed in Peter Steinfels's *The Neoconservatives* are absent in his recent article on the Theology in the Americas (TIA) conference in Detroit. These absences render his article a major disservice to the Christian left in the United States. Therefore it is necessary to set the record straight.

First, Mr. Steinfels's claim that various pressures were exerted to discourage applicants connected with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC)—of which he is a member—is unwarranted. The evidence he presents to defend such a grand accusation is shoddy, even for political journalism. He refers only to a friend who encountered obstacles, with no mention whatsoever of the criteria worked out over two years ago by the democratically constituted National Committee of TIA (of which I was a member). This committee, representing the nine projects of TIA, agreed that women and Third-World peoples should constitute at least fifty percent of the conference participants. It also agreed that each particular project, with its designated number, recruit its own people in light of the divergent ideological viewpoints within its ranks. Hence, it is more than likely that Mr. Steinfels's friend encountered obstacles not because of her connection with DSOC but rather because of her relation (or lack of relation) with a particular project.

Second, Mr. Steinfels's attempt to argue that a critical perspective on the U.S. labor movement leads necessarily to a vulgar Leninist position on social change—and hence his linking TIA to "the Communist party and other Leninist left-wing sects"—is unconvincing. TIA's critical attitude toward the U.S. labor movement is based on the undeniable commitment of the majority of the movement's leadership to the preservation and promotion of U.S. capitalism. This commitment is revealed not only in its domestic practices and policies, but also in the movement's widely documented support of U.S. imperialism abroad (e.g. the activities of the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development).

TIA's critical disposition toward the U.S. labor movement is neither inflexible nor dogmatic. It acknowledges the significant yet limited role played by marginal progressive figures in the movement's leadership; it also recognizes the need to support progressive rank-and-file dissident groups who must fight the union bureaucracy as well as management. And to suggest that this viewpoint is the monopoly of the Communist party (or other Leninist groups) and supportive of a Gulag is ludicrous. If Mr. Steinfels had but read an application to the conference he would have seen that TIA purports "to explore a creative form of socialism" which under decentralized democratic control precludes poverty and protects liberties.

Third, his remark concerning the lack of reference to the courageous struggle of Polish workers is, to put it bluntly, downright cheap. It should be obvious that the TIA working document was prepared far in advance of the conference (in the fall of 1979, to be exact)—hence, months before the Polish struggle escalated and temporarily grabbed the limelight from other gallant liberation struggles, e.g. in El Salvador, Guatemala, South Africa, etc. The same also holds for his tasteless quip about all the official organizers being on vacation—which is false but not worth pursuing.



Fourth, and most important, Mr. Steinfels (who did not attend the conference) gives the false impression that the Third-World coalition (he wrongly adds white feminists) "took over" by mau-mau tactics and that this "takeover" was anti-socialist and anti-white. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Third-World coalition, along with the other conference participants, acknowledged and endorsed the democratic process initiated by the National Committee of TIA years ago. After long discussions and dialogue—characterized by intense disagreement and mutual respect—between elected representatives of the projects, a decision was reached. This decision does not lead to what Mr. Steinfels calls "an intellectual, political and moral dead-end," but rather to a new level of Christian engagement in the struggle against racism and sexism which is adamantly anti-imperialist in character and creatively socialist in content.

CORNEL WEST
Member of Coordinating Team, TIA
Executive Director,
Black Theology Project, TIA
Assistant Professor,
Union Theological Seminary

Avoiding dogmatisms

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: The otherwise uniformly dependable Peter Steinfels bombed very badly in his report of the Detroit conference of Theology in the Americas. I find his claim that members of DSOC were barred because of their membership in that organization highly implausible. As an active member of DSOC I was happy to meet several other members there, to see the display of DSOC literature in the

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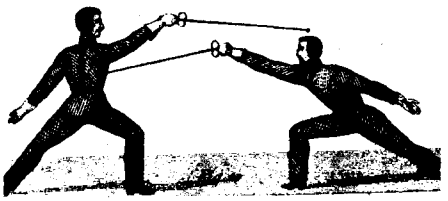

resources room, and to discover that a special meeting to introduce DSOC and its concerns took place at Detroit. If anyone was banned from Detroit II because of DSOC membership, that would be a serious wrongdoing; but I have seen no proof of this claim.

The strength of Detroit II was its diversity. By my count, of the roughly five hundred people there, half were white and half were people of color, half were Catholic and half were Protestants, half were men and half were women. Many came directly from hard battlefields of liberation struggles in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. It is just possible that the persons Steinfels refers to may have had difficulty getting preregistration because the planners were seeking to achieve just this remarkable admixture. For me the interaction and energy generated by this blending of Christians involved in such a variety of actions resulted in one of the best conferences I have ever attended in my life. And believe me, I have attended plenty.

As a member of DSOC I strongly believe in democratic socialism with equal emphasis on both words. I also realize that for many Christians in many places in the world today, both democracy and socialism have different meanings than we attach to them. The most moving statement at Detroit came from a young Catholic priest who had just been released from a Filipino prison after spending four years in it for opposing the Marcos regime. I was also reunited at Detroit with a former student of mine, a Nicaraguan Baptist minister who has spent the past three years in the Sandinista battle against Somoza. Both espouse types of socialism that differ in some respects from mine. There was all this and more. The American Indian participants held a tree-planting ceremony. The Hispanics sponsored a fabulous fiesta with a local Puerto Rican band. A high point of the week for me was a "labor history tour" of Detroit. But this heterogeneous flavor is missing from Steinfels's report. . . .

Steinfels believes that we must "choose our socialisms." I agree. I do not agree, however, with what seems to be the central political assertion of his article, namely that the deployment of a revolutionary avant-garde is the theory that has "led to the personal and party dictatorships of the Communist nations." It seems obvious to me that such dictatorships, which I vehemently oppose, are the result of a complex of historical causes, not just of avant-garde theory, and that in some situations (such as Zimbabwe and Nicaragua) some kind of avant-garde simply had to make a move. In both those lands, incidentally, it now seems evident that after such a struggle real democracy is not in fact ruled out at all. What I am saying is that in both the actual operation and discussion at Detroit, I sensed a much wider variety of political and philosophical options than Steinfels found in the preparatory document (which was never referred to at Detroit). So when he says that "it can reasonably be demanded that Theology in the Americas . . . demonstrate a basic clarity about what kind of socialism it has in mind," my eyes focus on the "it." TIA is not an "it." It is hundreds of Christians in a variety of contexts trying to be faithful to the Gospel in the real political world. In such a situation, all dogmatisms, both those that would exclude a DSOC perspective and those which would exclude Christians who have been forced to commit themselves to a more overtly revolutionary or even to an armed struggle strategy, must be avoided. In a world in which bishops are assassinated and Christians are tortured and exiled for being part of the search for liberation, those of us who are democratic socialists in the Western parliamentary sense must not prejudge our sisters and brothers whose historical reality necessitates other strategies.

Regarding what Steinfels considers TIA's attitude toward the labor movement, again I experienced the conference differently. There were persuasive statements on panel after panel from people involved in labor, many from Detroit itself. I heard of no doctrinaire insistence on working only with labor dissidents. Surely this is an instance in which a plurality of approaches must be maintained. Clearly there are some labor unions which authentically represent the interests of their members. Just as clearly there are some which do not. There were people at Detroit II working both these avenues. One of the best conversations I had was with a black woman who is a local officer in the UAW. Another was with a minister from Appalachia who is now gearing up for the contract fight the miners will undergo this coming spring. The Religion and Labor caucus played a vigorous role at Detroit II, and will I hope continue to play such a role in the future.

I will not comment on Steinfels's unspecified suggestion that what he calls "key elements" in the TIA were "at least 'close to' the Communist party and other Leninist sects." The wording of that sentence, its vaguely sinister phrasing, and its failure to allow for any reasonable response made me feel very uneasy. Who? How "close"? Close in what way? It all sounds too familiar, and I hope that on re-reading that paragraph Steinfels has had some second thoughts on whether it is wise or fair to employ this

Q. What gift lasts a year; is as close at hand as a pen and postage stamp; spreads the word, and carries on the good fight?

A. C--------- for Christmas.

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form of rhetoric. As for his curious statement that TIA did not support the strikes of the Polish workers, readers should remember that the conference took place in early August before news of that struggle reached America. I feel sure that had the participants in Detroit known about it, most would have supported and applauded it.

Finally, despite Steinfels's assertion, there was absolutely no "mau-mauing" at Detroit. Black, Hispanic, indigenous, Asian-American, white, and feminist participants spoke candidly and openly, listened to each other, expressed the need for coalitions. There was no "takeover." The conference changed from day to day in response to the movement and sentiment of participants. When the various projects were made responsible for the future leadership, it was by a vote of the entire assembly. May I also add that I do *not* find the road TIA has been traveling leading to "an intellectual, political, and moral dead-end." I find it one of the brightest hopes for the church and for theology today on an otherwise grim horizon. As a person with equal loyalties to both DSOC and TIA I hope that we can avoid any further perpetuation of sniping at each other, an activity which all "lefts" (including Christian ones) seem to do with such consummate skill, much to the delight of those who wish we would all just shut up and go away.

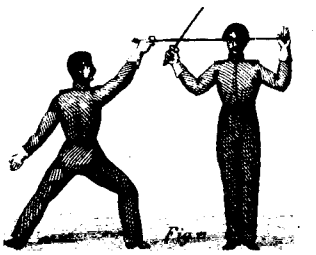
HARVEY COX

Criticism from within

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Peter Steinfels's analysis of the Theology in the Americas conference was disappointing for several reasons. I say this as one who objected well beforehand to the uncreative direction it was taking, an objection confirmed by the event itself.

First, his attack on the Leninism implicit in the strategy of many of the planners is bound to harden them in their Leninist convictions and further isolate them from the mainlines of American society. I don't agree either with basic Leninist assumptions of politics, but I believe it would be possible to begin a dialogue early on with religious people



who are moving in a Leninist direction. Most of them are good people, who are committed to the poor, scandalized by our social system, and hungry for any resources which may help them change it. By and large, they are not intellectuals with the leisure to reflect on substantive questions in the socialist tradition. Democratic socialists in my judgment, should follow a path of dialogue rather than condemnation. We might even learn something ourselves in the process.

Second, his references to a "takeover" by minorities as a *déjà vu* of the late sixties and as "self-destructive . . . mau-mauing" bears no relation to what actually happened and seems a racial slur. Liberation theology is premised on the assumption that the Gospel message is first mediated through the poor and oppressed, and hence (as many acknowledge) Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian-American religious traditions, as well as the religious experience of women, have a special message for us and a privileged place in a new theology.

Third, although I often quarreled with the assumptions and policies of the planners of the conference (perhaps more than anyone), I did not notice many DSOC people or democratic socialists willing to put in all the time and energy over the past six years to create and sustain Theology in the Americas. May it not be the residual legacy of colonialism which leads many democratic socialists to be distant from Third-World concerns, and then condemnatory of shortcomings? Criticisms will be creative only when they are raised from those who struggle alongside, not look down from above.

Let me conclude with an appeal. Peter Steinfels is obviously a gifted intellectual, who has made and will continue to make important contributions to the American left. Maybe he should spend a little time in the Third World, perhaps at least a month in Chile living in a poor squatter settlement? That's not impossible, and I'd be happy to help arrange it. His convictions about democratic socialism would hopefully be unchanged, but his style might be more creative. How about it?

JOE HOLLAND

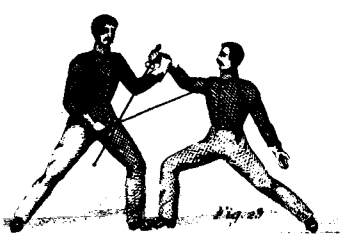
The author replies:

I am grateful to my correspondents not only for the compliments with which they precede their criticism, but for giving me an opportunity to clarify certain things in my original article.

First, some readers assumed that I was criticizing the very idea of exploring socialist alternatives for the United States. Quite the contrary. I was distressed because it seemed to me that Theology in the Americas was doing this badly needed exploration a grave disservice.

Second, some readers assumed I was present at the Detroit meeting. My correspondents rightly stress that I was not. I had meant to make completely clear not only that fact but also that I have had no close involvement with Theology in the Americas ("I write all this as an outsider to Theology in the Americas"). I was aware, as I wrote, of the "danger of misemphasis in such an outsider's view." And to counteract it, I put on record, in italics, the vote of confidence that even critics of the Detroit meeting voiced about TIA's long-range prospects.

In stressing the value of the Detroit meeting as a "happening" or a "learning experience," Mr. Faramelli and Mrs. Brown, in effect, charge me with precisely such misemphasis. Their viewpoint is probably representative of most conference participants, who are not much concerned (but perhaps should be) with the political questions I raised. My



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article did advert to the aspect of the meeting they describe (it "brought together a lot of old friends, and created some new friends, and there was surely much encouraging talk and even a bit of spiritually refreshing socializing"), but clearly my main concern was elsewhere.

I would like to return to this question of emphasis, but first some matters of clearcut difference.

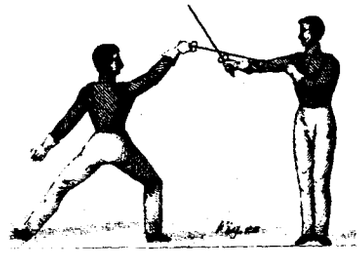
1. *Discrimination against DSOC members.* Harvey Cox finds this impossible to credit because of a DSOC presence in Detroit. But I did not write that all DSOC members (and especially prominent ones like himself) were banned. Cox is too good a logician to need me to point out that the fact that some DSOC members were present does not mean that others encountered no special obstacle in applying. Cornel West believes that the charge of discrimination is refuted by detailing the criteria that were established for attendance. These criteria, of which I was aware, left considerable discretion to the staff, and I remain persuaded that in some cases the criteria were applied so as to facilitate attendance and in other cases so as to discourage it.

Of course the people I talked to could have imagined this discrimination; I don't believe so. They are trustworthy, they are *not* anti-TIA, and their experience is in no way rebutted by the facts that Cox and West mention.

2. *TIA and the labor movement.* Cox and West insist that TIA is not dogmatic on this subject. I only know (and only said) that there was a current of opinion in the organization that would lump "the majority of American labor leaders" with "corporate capitalists" as the adversaries of American workers. This opinion prevailed in Detroit, and neither Cox nor West says otherwise. That U.S. labor leaders are by and large committed to capitalism is, as West says, true. It is also true that by and large U.S. workers are committed to capitalism. If anything, union leadership is somewhat to the left of membership. It is neglect of facts like these that reveals the sectarian mentality.

I did not, however, write that a concern with labor dissidents is *necessarily* tied to, or is a monopoly of, a Leninist outlook. I wrote just the opposite. ("There can, in fact, be many other reasons for supporting labor dissidents.") But while stressing the lack of logical connection, West says nothing about the factual connection, specifically in TIA's case, between such an attitude toward the labor movement and such a general political outlook. Holland, in effect, confirms the connection.

3. *The politics of leading individuals in TIA.* Harvey Cox finds my statement on this matter "vaguely sinister" and hopes I had "second thoughts" about it. Well, I did have second thoughts, and I even expressed them in my article. On the face of it, there is no reason that the political outlook of individuals working for a political organization should not be fair game for examination. If members of a religious social action group were reported to be sympathetic to Opus Dei or



to have taken the same position on the Panama Canal treaty as Moral Majority, would Cox suggest that such reports be ignored as unworthy of mention? Was he concerned about the political allegiances of the CELAM staff and advisors preparing for the Puebla meeting last year? The problem is that historically reports of left-wing views have been exaggerated or abused. My solution was to conclude, "Leave personal politics . . . out of it"—in other words, let TIA insiders be monarchists, Maoists, or members of the Mickey Mouse Club—*just as long as the organization is fundamentally clear about the kind of radical alternatives it favors and rejects.*

4. *TIA's failure to "name" its socialism.* This was the central concern of my piece (as well as its title). I am sorry that my correspondents have so little to say about it. Cox's and West's misreading of my point about the Polish workers' struggle reveals how little they have confronted my argument. *Of course* I knew that the working document and the conference pre-dated the strike. But the oppression of Polish workers and Polish intellectuals and Polish religious believers, and the resistance this oppression has provoked, are matters of long standing. Are they addressed anywhere in the conference's working document? Were any spokespeople for dissidents in Soviet-bloc nations invited to the meeting? Was there any criticism of "socialist countries" (e.g., Vietnam, Cuba) contained in the working documents—or speakers chosen to address those problems at the conference? My impression is that the double standard is so ingrained in certain segments of the left ("liberation struggles" actually means "struggle against Western capitalism") that no one even notices any more.

My central argument was that you cannot seriously discuss socialist alternatives without acknowledging and analyzing the massive evils that have been committed and institutionalized in the name of socialism. At least in the United States, to do otherwise is politically suicidal. More important, it is intellectually and morally bankrupt.

Professor West seems to think that he disposes of this problem by citing a phrase from TIA's Detroit objectives about the exploration of "creative" forms of socialism. (The statement about "decentralized democratic control" that "precludes poverty and protects liberties" is his own gloss on the text—a welcome one. However, neither the conference objectives nor the working document's section on the socialist alternative mention decentralization or, for that matter, liberties.) But phrases like these are open to all sorts of readings. No doubt Messrs. Stalin and Pol Pot thought their forms of socialism "creative," and in a diabolical way they were. Such vague tags salve a few consciences while evading the real issue.

Harvey Cox, in fact, reinforces this point when he speaks of the different meanings which can be attached to words like democracy and socialism. And I entirely agree with his suggestion that there are valid notions of democracy and socialism that may not fit our preconceptions or experience. But surely he would

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admit, in turn, that our century has frequently seen these terms transformed into Orwellian grotesqueries. That would seem to make it all the more necessary that at least one touchstone for any discussion of socialist alternatives should be the historical cases for which claims of "socialism" have been put forth.

Harvey Cox and I could have a good argument about the relative weight of the revolutionary avant-garde phenomenon, as distinct from other historical factors, in accounting for Communist dictatorships. I would want to disagree with his use of the examples of Zimbabwe and (especially) Nicaragua, as well as insist that it will be some time before democracy and socialism can be said to be established there. But in fact my statements about the revolutionary avant-garde were not my "central political assertion." They were subsidiary to my point about TIA demonstrating a basic clarity about the kind of socialism it has in mind—to which Cox replies that TIA is not an "it" but "hundreds of Christians" struggling "in a variety of contexts," all of which rules out any prejudgment.

I find this reply highly unpersuasive. All this variety of individuals and contexts does not seem to prevent TIA from making some pretty definitive—dare one say dogmatic—judgments about America, capitalism, international affairs, etc. The complexity of historical causes and contexts does not prevent TIA from prejudging strategies recommended by the Milton Friedmans of the world or from judging the violations of rights that assorted juntas claim to be necessitated by their particular historical reality. I do not dispute many of these judgments. I do wonder why TIA should suddenly become so permissive and modest when it comes to some basic judgments about forms of socialism.

A similar double standard pervades Joe Holland's pleas for "dialogue" and criticism only from "alongside." There are many potential partners for dialogue, potential allies in struggle. We cannot avoid exerting our critical faculties about what engagements are most promising.

5. *The "takeover" at Detroit.* Readers may judge for themselves whether the events described in these letters qualify as a "takeover." In my article I used the word once and put it in quotation marks (a) because that was the term that others employed, and (b) because the word seemed only to approximate what occurred. I never suggested that the transfer of control was not democratically accomplished. And I did *not* say there was any "mau-mauing" at Detroit. What I said was that *in my experience during the late sixties*, organizations that had suspended the normal one-person/one-vote principle in order to give minorities stronger voice almost always found themselves eventually caught up in a self-destructive "species of manipulative rhetoric—popularly known as 'mau-mauing.' " I mentioned this as a past problem that I hoped would not be repeated. Holland, Cox, and West really should read more carefully.

I simply don't know what Professor West means by my "tasteless quip" about being told that the conference's organizers were on vacation. That was no quip, tasteless or otherwise; it was a plain report of what I was told when I called the TIA office, asked for three or four individuals and then asked if there were any other individuals responsible for the meeting whom I could reach in the next two days. If such individuals were in fact available for comment, then West has a valid complaint—but not with me.

FINALLY, the question of emphasis. In one sense, the concrete descriptions by Sydney Brown and Harvey Cox (and the reference to "happenings" by Norman Faramelli) are a healthy counterpoint to my article. I can certainly understand their sense of solidarity with admirable people who have endured in the struggle for social justice, and their sense of exaltation at the heterogeneity of the Detroit participants.

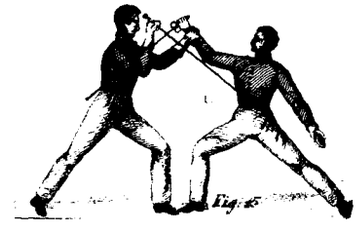
But there are limits to the usefulness of such experiences and reactions as political guides. I have little doubt that delegates to meetings of very different political hues—right to life congresses come to mind—have at least analogous experiences. Perhaps it is only an advanced case of jadedness that makes me smile at Sydney Brown's W.P.A. mural, complete with worker priests, "feisty feminists," Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics, all "swept into gaiety and dancing" by "wine and Puerto Rican music." But I think that such sentimentality also might have something to do with elementary political errors. E.g., it is *not* true that America's poor "are for the most part people of color." E.g., it is not true that her Shockley-loving, *Playboy*-reading young professor adequately represents the "real world" or the "white world"—any more than the drug-dealing hustlers who hang out in my neighborhood adequately represent "people of color." S/he who lives by the stereotype will die by the stereotype.

The same problem arises, perhaps in a more serious way, in the letters from Harvey Cox and Joe Holland. Both repeatedly refer to "Third-World concerns," to the "hard battlefields of . . . El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Philippines," and to the sacrifices and sufferings of people in those areas. These references provide an emotional backdrop, but they actually have very little logical connection with the validity of the political stance chosen by Theology in the Americas *in this country*.

At its worst, this kind of invocation (should we call it "Third-Worlding"?), as well as facile divisions into oppressors and oppressed, verges on intellectual bullying; more often, it is only distracting.

I would submit that domination by Third-World references, and the corresponding conceptualization of *American* politics in Third-World terms, has impaired left-wing political thinking and strategy in the U.S. as much as any other factor over the last decade and a half. (And thereby, of course, harmed the cause of the Third World.) Oddly enough, this tendency runs directly counter to that "contextualization" that is so important in liberation theology.

The 1980 presidential election vividly



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illustrated the extent to which left-wing alternatives have been pushed to the margins of U.S. politics. It is easy enough to blame the "real world" for this rather than to look at the left itself more critically. I am sure that a month among the poor in Chile would enlarge my perspective as would a month in Cambodia, East Germany, Egypt, or almost anywhere. (I look forward to the funding Joe Holland will provide *Commonweal* and my family so that this broadening can come about.) But I might suggest that barring the possibility of turning all American voters into peace-and-justice professionals who travel around the globe, it would be shrewder to concentrate on why so many of them find conservative rather than liberal (let alone socialist) alternatives more credible at this time in this country. It might have something to do with the kind of intellectual weaknesses and moral evasions found in the TIA working document.

Since Theology in the Americas seemed to have affirmed a desire, in Norman Faramelli's apt terms, to turn from "universalized slogans" to a "concern for 'particularity' " a concern that might very well include what I have in mind, I wished it well. I still do. I can't say, however, that these letters are very encouraging. PETER STEINFELS

Art

AMERICA ON DISPLAY

LESS THAN VISIONARY SPACE

THE LAST YEAR and a half has been an extraordinary time for American art: an "American Renaissance" show at the Brooklyn Museum, a luminist show at the National Gallery, an "American Impressionism" show at Seattle's Henry Gallery, and most recently, an Edward Hopper retrospective at the Whitney. But the event most likely to affect the way American art is seen in the future is none of these nor anything so transitory as an exhibit. It is this summer's opening of the new American Wing at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

If ever a Museum addition *seemed* built to illustrate Charles Olson's declaration, "I take *space* to be the central fact to man born in America," it is the Met's new American Wing. As designed by Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo, the American Wing has not only used light and space with stunning results, it has opened itself to the hills and surrounding foliage of Central Park. The entrance to the American Wing is the 12,000 square foot Charles Engelhard Court, where light pours in through the glassed-in west wall and a skylight 5½ stories above the floor, and from this point on the feeling of openness that Engelhard Court achieves pervades the rest of the galleries. The main galleries are not only large enough that Emanuel Leutze's enormous (12½′ by 21′) *Washington Crossing the Delaware* can comfortably share wall space, they are designed so that, as we move from room to room, we do not simply go from one horizontal rectangle to another. By the time we get to the Met's spectacular collection of Thomas Eakins paintings, the American Wing narrows to a long balcony gallery that offers a fresh view of Central Park, then surprises us again by dropping a level to a mezzanine floor that takes us from a series of elegant John Singer Sargent portraits, through American impressionism, to a small twentieth-century gallery that offers still another glimpse of Central Park.

For the Met to have committed $18 million to a six-fold expansion of its American Wing is particularly significant, not only for what it says about the current status of American art but for what it reveals about the past. Although the Met's guide to the American Wing declares, "Since its opening in 1870 the Museum has been a consistent patron of American art," the Museum's purchasing history tells a different tale. More typical are the views of the turn-of-the-century Met trustee who observed, "There is nothing American worth notice." As Calvin Tomkins points out in his history of the Met, *Merchants and Masterpieces*, the men who were the first patrons of the Museum wanted art that was indisputably *important*, and in the name of prestige the Museum turned to Europe with its Old Masters rather than to America. During the Met's first half-century this European emphasis remained, and even in the 1920s matters did not change significantly. In the early 1920s money earmarked for American purchases was allowed to pile up unused, and in 1929 the Met refused an offer of what was then the largest private collection of American art, that of Gertrude Whitney.

Despite its failed merger with the Whitney Museum in the late 1940s, the Met has come a long way from its early thinking on American art, and the new American Wing provides dramatic illustration that the Met is willing to spend money to continue its break with the past. But what is not clear is how much of a break with the past the new American Wing represents or what the relationship between the Wing's vastness and the Museum's American holdings is. In one of the few critical evaluations of the new American Wing, Ada Louise Huxtable has described it as possessing both "impressive amounts of space and a creeping corporate veneer," and it is precisely in this tension that the new Wing's problems lie. The space that Charles Olson describes as an American fact of life, like the space American artists from Thomas Cole to Georgia O'Keeffe have painted, is—whether one is speaking in religious or political terms—essentially visionary space. It is not a source of leisure but a place where man encounters God, where settlers created a democracy in the midst of wilderness, and what the Met has done with its new space time and again fails to live up to this ideal.

The Charles Engelhard Court, the most spectacular part of the new American Wing, is a perfect case in point. Were the Court an addition to Kevin Roche's Ford Foundation Building, there would be no question as to its purposes. But at the Met the vastness of the Court, the links it makes with Central Park are contradicted by what it contains. Everywhere the

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Museum-goer turns in Engelhard Court, he finds a monument to affluence. The north wall is dominated by the neoclassic facade of Martin E. Thompson's 1824 United States Branch Bank. The south wall by the loggia of Louis Tiffany's turn-of-the-century Laurelton Hall, and the west wall by a marble and mosaic mantelpiece that John LaFarge, George B. Post, and August Saint-Gaudens did in 1882 for the Cornelius Vanderbilt mansion on Fifth Avenue. But most importantly, Engelhard Court is not an isolated example of how often the Met's new Wing does not come to terms with the political and theological implications of American art. The Met has chosen to exhibit American folk art but done so in a way that it is crammed together in one small room with everything from Edward Hicks's *The Falls of Niagara* to Shaker baskets and Amish quilts competing for space, and the same kind of thinking applies to the Met's display case featuring art from the American West. At the heart of the display are Frederic Remington's bronzes of cowboys, outlaws, and cavalry. Yet in the same case we also find Albert Bierstdat's *The Merced River, Yosemite Valley*, as though it, too, conveyed a sense of American expansionism and the conquest of the West.

What all this says about the Met and its new American Wing is not, of course, that in the name of egalitarianism the Museum should begin a program of radical de-acquisition or that its American holdings are anything but spectacular in quantity and quality. Rather what it points up is that the Met's past lingers on in a fashion that still leaves much to be desired and that the spaciousness of its new American wing, unlike the traditionalism of the 1924 Grosvenor Atterbury Wing, belies. Sad to say, it is not difficult to imagine Joseph H. Choate, one of the Met's founding trustees, touring the new American Wing and remarking as he did a century ago. "Every nation that has tried it has found that every wise investment in the development of art pays more than compound interest." Choate would be wrong in applying such commercial metaphors to the Met's American Wing, but not so wrong that their implications can be ignored.

NICOLAUS MILLS

Stage

STILL BREAKING AWAY

FARCE WHICH PUNCHES TOO HARD

THE ONLY Steve Tesich play I saw before the movie *Breaking Away* was *Lake of the Woods*, which shared stage space at the American Place Theatre with Ronald Ribman's *Fingernails Blue as Flowers* back in 1971. Already a Ribman admirer by then, I had gone to see *Fingernails* and to have a look at the American Place's new quarters; so I may not have been properly predisposed to receive Tesich's offering. Now, almost ten years later, all that I remember is a handful of people milling about in a woods full of significance rather than trees and my exasperation with the whole enterprise. In a recent interview in the *New York Times* (October 5), Tesich said of his early plays, "I saw all those people as people, not as symbols of Old America or New America or whatever," but a playwright who sets his play in the "Great Outdoors"—and not as a joke—may justly be suspected of symbolic leanings.

Breaking Away came, then, as a surprise and a pleasure. My own Indiana connections make me suspect the reality of some of the characters, but they were played as real people, thus harking back to a kind of movie that was popular before fourteen-year-old Tesich emigrated from Yugoslavia—before he was born, for that matter. Nineteen-thirties movie comedies, turning Marianne Moore inside out, put imaginary toads in real gardens, presented a collection of eccentrics who borrowed validity from their surroundings and the performers who embodied them, and manipulated incident and character to reach the ritual happy ending which—although we might not get the girl, the job, the round of applause—assured us that such an ending was always a possibility. Tesich, recalling his bicycling days in the *Times*, lets us know that his team won the "Little 500," which means the university team not the townies, but it was artistically and psychologically—perhaps even ideologically—sound to give the victory in the movie to the underdogs and let us all come out on top.

In *Breaking Away*, Tesich and director Peter Yates returned to the substance of an earlier kind of popular film at a time when the best that moviegoers were likely to get was the surface recollection of genre parody. The news that Tesich's new play *Division Street*, warmly received at the Mark Taper in Los Angeles, was a farce on a serious subject held a happy promise. There had not been a farce worthy of the name on Broadway since Murray Schisgal's *All Over Town* (1975), and it simply presented the genre without attempting to transcend it. *Division Street* certainly makes use of all the standard farce devices—mistaken identities, confrontations avoided in an hysteria of exits and entrances, characters on the verge of caricature—and its subject (where have all the flowers gone?) is an important one. Its weaknesses are those of a farce which punches too hard, and it is saved—in so far as it is saved—by an ending which is a kind of cousin to the one in *Breaking Away*.

In the play, Chris, a hero of the 1960s, convert to the ME generation, is discovered when an alert photographer catches him upchucking on the street after an inedible ethnic meal. The event and the publicity bring to his apartment a number of his old associates and several other people who need the community of the old idealism. Each of them, as farce characters usually are, is identified by a particular compulsion and/or decorated with a verbal or physical tic. Thus Chris's former wife carries a bullhorn, which makes some sense as a torch for a lost love, but for no discernible reason she speaks in song lyrics that predate the decade of revolution. The restaurant owner, come to reclaim his honor, is a Serbian immigrant who speaks in mangled American clichés. The joke about Chris's landlady is that she is a Black woman with a Polish accent, and

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his Black-revolutionary chum, now a policewoman since his sex change, is saddled with a drag turn in which the masculine mannerisms keep breaking through. The success of a farce depends on the audience's acceptance of the artificial identification tags and the cheerful anticipation of their repeated use. Here, the repetition becomes tiresome—the character who harps on the tyranny of female orgasm provides the best example—but I suspect that the reason lies in the decision to play the characters as complete cartoons with no incipient human beings glimpsed behind the farce masks. The two exceptions indicate the possibility lost. John Lithgow has a fine sense of farce timing, but his Chris suggests not only the traditional farce protagonist but a real man beset by a past that he both wants and hates to escape. Anthony Holland, as a nerd so inconsequential as to be virtually invisible, retains the ability, which he has had since his Second City days, to put pathos into a cliché; even he begins to turn simply shrill as Tesich makes him do his bit once too often.

These conventional farce figures speak lines that recall the past and comment on the present, sometimes satirically, and sing snatches of movement songs, more nostalgically than comically. These elements would mix uncomfortably if they were not brought together by the odd ending. With the entire cast gathered for the final curtain, the identities all sorted out and everyone urging Chris to lead the new crusade, the restaurateur begins softly to sing "America, the Beautiful." First one, than another character picks it up, but this parody of the end of *The Deer Hunter* takes a direction of its own. Chris takes up his bullhorn and the song comes up, a mighty massed choir on the sound system; as the characters move to the front, a giant American flag drops from above, filling the stage. Preposterous, like the flag that corny vaudeville performers used to produce to cap their collapsing act. A joke about commitment, then, but it reaches back to a serious speech that Chris has made, explaining the 1960s to a girl too young to have experienced them, and it reaches out into the auditorium. The audience with which I saw *Division Street* at one of the last previews went laughing from the theater, but it was not the laughter of mockery or derision; it was a kind of warmth that recognized the ludicrousness of the play's ending but embraced it all the same. In the *Times* interview, Tesich said that he can feel the return of the kind of idealism that marked the 1960s (he had presumably not been watching the presidential campaigners in action), but he says too that people are suspicious of optimism and that a writer has to "just sort of sneak it in." His way of sneaking it in is about as quiet as a kettle drum in a phone booth, but it seems to work. I wish the rest of the play did, too.

GERALD WEALES

COMING: George H. Dunne, S.J., writes, "in the twilight of my life," to a student—about belief in God and the meaning of Christian vocation. Edward Vacek, S.J., writes on "A Christian Homosexuality?"

Screen

RECALLED TO LIFE

AFTER WAITING FOR GODARD

IN JEAN-LUC GODARD'S *Contempt* (1963), the characters at one point enter a screening room on whose wall is inscribed a quotation from the movie pioneer Lumière: "The cinema is an invention without a future." Little by little over the past ten years, I have come to agree. Godard's own career has provided a kind of frame around my gradual, grudging capitulation to Lumière's point of view. When I first decided to write about movies, it was Godard's work that made me feel the necessity of doing so. Going to his films throughout the sixties was what made moviegoing seem that important. Yet at the very moment I began to write, Godard himself was losing interest. Politics was taking precedence over movies in his life and would soon eclipse them altogether, nearly eliminate them from his activities, as he went to live in a commune where his only filmmaking was a little experimentation with video. In his way Godard was doing what so many of the best filmmakers have done: repudiating his own best work, talking himself out of movies, which thereby became, once again, an invention without a future.

As I was explaining in my previous column, my attitude toward movies had about touched bottom when it again came time to attend the press screening for the New York Film Festival this fall. I was at the point where almost the only thing that could have restored my faith in movies would have been for Godard himself to come back from the dead. And this, with the American premiere of his new *Every Man for Himself*, was exactly what happened.

The astounding thing about the film is how familiar and accessible it seems. It is as if Godard's ten-year absence from filmmaking has not been an absence at all, but just a brief period when *we* left the room. Now we are able to come back and pick up the threads of what he is saying with no difficulty. One reason this seems surprising is that the film clearly grows out of his recent thoughts and activities about which we know nothing. It is a self-consciously autobiographical film, for the central character is named Paul Godard (Jacques Duytronc) and the concerns of other characters are also very close to Godard's own. Denise (Nathalie Baye), for whom Paul has left his family, wants to leave the city but can't decide what to do with herself if she does leave. This was very much the situation Godard was in ten or so years ago when he wanted to get away from Paris and decided to go live in the more provincial, rural Clermont-Ferrand district. What Godard finally found to pass the time was, as I said, video. That preoccupation shapes this film, too. The most innovative thing about the film is a use of stop-motion/slow-motion photography of the sort to which

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videotape has accustomed us through the instant replays of sports events on television.

When I say that *Every Man for Himself* seems familiar, I don't mean that it seems easy. It is a demanding film, as all Godard's have been. Beyond interrupting itself by atomizing the action with slow-motion shots, the whole movie seems to be a process of interruption. Along with the story of Paul and Denise, the film contains the story of a prostitute named Isabelle (Isabelle Huppert) whose life criss-crosses but never quite touches Paul's. (In the final scene a car containing Isabelle's sister and a pimp hits Paul as he is arguing with his wife in the street.) Yet the way that the film constantly leaves one character's story half untold and jumps to somebody else's is one of the things that gives us the sense of *déjà vu* we have while watching it. The use of such abrupt, choppy, disconnected narratives is the technique which Godard himself developed and was known for in the sixties.

Part of the reason it is possible for us to come back readily to Godard's sinuous, elliptical style of filmmaking after so long an absence is, we realize, that that style has had an enormous impact on all the movies we see. It has percolated down through the whole of film culture. It has powerfully affected not only American filmmakers who have great originality of their own, such as Altman, but a whole generation of imitators and popularizers. Twenty years ago Godard's style struck us as an audacious kind of poetry, a polemic, a new rhetoric in which to argue about how movies should be made. It was so audacious that it changed the way both filmmakers and audiences thought about movies. Having at first been the rarest poetry, it became part of the fundamental grammar of movies.

If *Every Man for Himself* reminds us how influential Godard has been, it also reminds us of his own earlier career, and of the history of the movies in general. It has that uncanny ability his films always seem to possess of bringing the whole history of the movies into the present. The films from his own past to which this one seems to allude are *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962) and, more strongly still, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966). Both those films are about prostitutes like this one. Like *Vivre Sa Vie*, the new film is divided into numbered, titled sections, and like *Two or Three Things*, it makes us feel the prostitute's role as an almost allegorical one, a depiction of the culture at large. Even the most novel and contemporary aspect of the new film, the video-like use of slow motion, seems at the same time a backward glance.

Among other things it is a reflection on the fact that the precursors of movies were, paradoxically, attempts to freeze motion rather than create the illusion of it. They were the experiments of the nineteenth-century Frenchman Marey, and of Eadweard Muybridge, who proved that there's a point where a galloping horse's hooves all leave the ground. Both these photographers used stop motion as Godard does, in order to analyze and emphasize physical gestures. Keaton and Chaplin both had their films shot at variable speeds to enhance the effects of comedy or pathos they wished to create. And Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* used a kind of stop action/slow motion at certain crucial moments too. This was for Eisenstein both a way to project onto events a Marxist interpretation of history, a sense of determinism in the Potemkin mutiny, and a way to accustom the audience to his new ideas about film montage.

Eisenstein was of course another basic grammarian of film. When Godard talked during a press conference about his use of slow motion, the continuity between it and Eisenstein's ideas about montage seemed obvious. Godard said that he only began to direct at the point where he started looking at the individual frames in different shots, trying to decide where to put the stops. Before that, he feels, there was only the writing, the script. To equate directing solely with editing this way is a very Eisensteinian notion. The implicit emphasis on structure in these remarks may seem odd for a filmmaker whose films were accused often of being wild and chaotic and having no structure of the usual, narrative sort. In *Every Man for Himself* Godard is trying, as always, to work intuitively, to do away with preconceived structures like plot, to be open to chance and improvisation. One moment where we can sense this is the final scene between Paul and Denise. They meet on a train platform, and as they talk an express comes through the station so that one of them has to quickly pull the other away from the platform's edge. Godard doesn't run his productions as if they themselves were railroads. It's doubtful that he consulted the timetable in order to be sure a train would come through and occasion this little gesture of rescue. More likely is that the train took everyone, including the actors, by surprise.

But that would be precisely why Godard used it, why it fits. Moreover, it has a mysterious bearing on the film's last scene, where Paul's wife does not keep him from getting too close to the edge in a similar situation. She allows him to back into the street as they are arguing and be hit by a car. The only structure that Godard's film has exists in connections like this between the scenes. That is the only structure his films ever have, one created through editing. Parallels of this kind carry the emotion from scene to scene in a film; and from Eisenstein to Hitchcock to François Truffaut, such parallels have always been present, yet invisible in a way, hidden behind the plot. By tearing down plot, Godard attempts to reveal this other, associative structure underneath. Doing so has made his role in the history of the movies a rather Hegelian one. He has tried to bring history itself to consciousness, to raise both the making and watching of movies to a new level of awareness.

Every Man for Himself seemed to infuse a number of subsequent screenings at the festival with new life. It even made a seven-hour retrospective of Louis Feuillade's 1918 serial *Tih Minh* fascinating to watch. There in Feuillade's loose, aimless story and constant repetitions from one installment to the next were the raw materials from which Eisenstein and Godard were to fashion movie art. The whole history of the movies was so simple, really, and so thrilling when you thought about it. Maybe the movies didn't have any future, as Lumière had said years before Feuillade began making films. What Lumière couldn't foresee, however, is what an incredibly rich past the movies would turn out to have.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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Books: DEMOCRACY IS THE CURE

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY
THE CHALLENGE OF THE '80'S
Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer
M. E. Sharpe, $15, 436 pp.

Robert Howard

WHEN it comes to American economic policy, the marketplace of ideas is anything but free. This explains in part why the great economic debate promised for this election year has been such a dismal failure. Whether the topic is the budget, tax cuts, industrial policy, or the "reindustrialization of America," the major candidates have displayed a predictable reliance on the same old set of unquestioned economic assumptions. Their pronouncements and their programs are strikingly consistent in their systematic evasion of the basic realities of economic power in the United States today.

Economic Democracy by Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer speaks to this double failure of economic ideas and political leadership. Its thesis is that the multiple problems confronting our economy—inflation, unemployment, poverty, the energy crisis, work and its discontents—are built into the very structure of an economy shaped by the decisions of, at most, a few hundred giant private banks and corporations. "The U.S. economy," the authors write, "is faced with a set of economic problems that appear to be *unsolvable* by corporate capitalist development. If changes are to be made, then the way the economy is governed and the way things are produced will have to be changed as well. The essence of such transformation is economic democracy—the transfer of economic decision-making from the few to the many."

Economic Democracy is an attempt to imagine an alternative political reality. With intelligence and ambition, Carnoy and Shearer have sketched a detailed portrait of what a more democratic and egalitarian society would look like, how it would function, who would benefit from it. They analyze mechanisms for limiting corporate power, explore a variety of alternative economic policies and institutions, and set out a scenario for a new social movement of the eighties which they claim can mobilize a majority of American citizens behind their proposals for economic reform. It is an immense—one is tempted to say "impossible"—project. But it works, largely due to the authors' informed pragmatism, their refreshing openness to the ideas and policy experiments of other societies (particularly Sweden), and their sensitivity to the opportunities for social change as well as the obstacles against it embodied in America's unique political history.

By "economic democracy," Carnoy and Shearer mean something very different from the reigning conservative and liberal models of how our economy works. The new conservative economics embraced by Mr. Reagan wants to "unleash" the private sector by radically limiting government. But to assume that the market rationally allocates resources is to ignore the considerable evidence of how the massive concentration of corporate wealth distorts the investment process. The Republican party's tax cut plan, for example, would not only have regressive distributional effects; it would increase corporate profits without guaranteeing that they be channeled into socially useful investment. A program of economic democracy, by contrast, would subordinate tax policy to a comprehensive plan of public investment that would benefit taxpayers directly rather than trickling scarce resources through a wasteful "corporate filter."

However, while Carnoy and Shearer accept the necessity of an activist government, they are equally critical of what passes for "intervention" in the liberal welfare state. Most government policies from fiscal and monetary policy to the recent bail-out of the Chrysler Corporation end up serving the very corporate interests that dominate the private sector. Even the social welfare programs specifically designed to help the poor are carried out within well defined limits. The challenge of a government committed to economic democracy is to fashion qualitatively new mechanisms of public intervention, ones that "restrict corporate power instead of aiding and abetting it." For example, such a government might still decide to help out Chrysler, but it would use federal aid as a tool to push the corporation toward greater democratization—perhaps by demanding an equity position in the firm, by appointing public representatives to the board of directors, or even by coordinating corporate planning so that Chrysler's production meets urgent national priorities such as energy efficiency or mass transit.

This goal of restraining corporate power through a new kind of government activism does not necessarily mean that economic democracy would extend the power of the state for its own sake. Carnoy and Shearer are not advocates of a centralized state socialism. They oppose widespread nationalization, for example, on the grounds that too much government ownership could become an obstacle to democratic decision-making. They also warn against the dangers of "lemon socialism"—endless government subsidy of chronically ailing firms or industries.

Instead, the authors envision a policy of "strategic intervention" in which a public holding company would acquire controlling interest in certain major firms in key sectors of the economy. Two absolutely crucial priorities would be a public energy corporation and a public bank. The former would serve as a yardstick for evaluating the production costs, pricing policies, and investment decisions of the major oil companies and at long last would provide the federal government with an effective vehicle for implementing a national energy policy. The latter would direct badly needed capital to al-

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ternative institutions like worker cooperatives, appropriate technology firms, or state and municipal low-cost housing agencies. Public enterprises at the "commanding heights" of the economy would serve as indicators for the economy as a whole and testing grounds for new forms of democratic participation and production for social need.

The ultimate goal would be, in the words of the late British socialist C.A.R. Crosland, "a society in which ownership is thoroughly mixed up" with the federal government, unions, cities and states, groups of workers and consumers, pension funds, foundations, and, of course, owners of private capital all taking part. In such a pluralist society, conflict over the ends and means of economic activity certainly wouldn't disappear. But the structure of the economy would prevent the narrow interests of any single social group from predominating.

Carnoy and Shearer's central accomplishment is to pose what may be the most difficult political question of the decades to come: how to reconcile the democratic values of American society with the necessity of more comprehensive economic planning imposed by changing economic circumstances. Taking democracy seriously in the new economic era requires extending it to the workplace, the union hall, the boardroom. Likewise, democratic discussion and debate is the only stable foundation for the new social and political consensus about economic goals. Without this any long-range revitalization of the American economy will be impossible. The authors' faith in the continuing relevance of our democratic and egalitarian traditions is a testament to the tenacious promise of politics and social change. In an election year that has done so much to undermine both their effort is welcome.

The bible & the christological enterprise

CHRIST
THE EXPERIENCE OF JESUS AS LORD

Edward Schillebeeckx

Seabury, $29.50, 925 pp.

Raymond E. Brown

THE FIRST volume of Schillebeeckx's christology was entitled *Jesus*, ran 767 pages, and cost $24.50. (Comparison with the present volume has caused a wag to remark that if there is a third volume, it will be entitled *Jesus Christ*, run 1200 pages, and cost $34.50.) The two English titles, *Jesus* and *Christ*, for those who have ears to hear, are meant to catch the difference between the two volumes. *Jesus* required the author to do detective work, going behind the New Testament books and beneath their faith-colored portrayal of Christ to reconstruct the historical Jesus and his challenge to people. *Christ* digests and analyzes the New Testament portrayals themselves and concentrates on the way in which Jesus was experienced as Christ and Lord by those who believed in him. Much of the scholarly critique of the first volume, while mixed with admiration for Schillebeeckx's endeavor, questioned the methodology and accuracy of the reconstruction, especially as regards the resurrection event. The present volume, being more descriptive, may come under less fire. English readers will get a chance to appreciate the quality of the European critique when the short volume that Schillebeeckx wrote in 1978 as an answer to his critics is translated into English (*Interim Report on the Books* Jesus *and* Christ, Crossroad Books, 1981).

If I have drawn attention to the length of the volumes, it is because I suspect that this will work against the enduring impact of Schillebeeckx's monumental effort. The number of people who are willing to plough their way through 1700 close-printed pages on christology are few, especially if it is realized that these two volumes represent chiefly the New Testament area, and equal time would have to be given to patristic and scholastic reflection. And even for those who do read the two volumes, the thrust of what Schillebeeckx is saying is dissipated by the length of time they take. (I write this as a fellow-sinner who is responsible for long biblical commentaries; but readers consult commentaries for information on a particular passage, and no piecemeal approach to Schillebeeckx is possible.) A price of almost $55 for the two volumes will force many students to library usage. As a teacher I wonder would not a student emerge with a more cohesive idea of a New Testament christology from select chapters of some 200 pages in J. D. G. Dunn's *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*.

The opening of the volume insists correctly that the believer's experience is an intrinsic part of New Testament revelation and an ongoing part of the interpretation of that revelation: "The account of the life of Christians in the world in which they live is a fifth gospel; it also belongs at the heart of christology." The author fears, however, that today Jesus may be becoming a nebulous figure and a symbolic point of reference for what is really experienced from other sources than the New Testament. To counter that Schillebeeckx is drawing attention to the experience of the first Christians when Jesus was proclaimed to them by the preachers and to how they expressed that experience. But Schillebeeckx understands that he is still in the area of a prolegomenon in treating the New Testament: "Perhaps it will be possible to make a beginning on what is called 'christology' after the second volume." Most theologians agree the New Testament explains Jesus in terms no longer valid for our world of experience, yet the ultimate test of newer forms of christological experience will be whether they preserve the basis of New Testament experience.

In discussing that experience and its expressions Schillebeeckx wisely begins with Old Testament and early Jewish thought about the "mercy" of God, since the first Christians saw a continuity with the past (as well as novelty) in the divine grace they encountered in Jesus. Moving to the Christian record, Schillebeeckx starts with the oldest section of the New Testament, the collected letters of Paul, among which he distinguishes authentic Pauline letters, a transitional Pauline piece (Philippians), and Pauline

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works "outside the authentic letters" (Colossians, Ephesians, II Thessalonians). He distances I-II Timothy and Titus even further from Paul by treating them with Jude and II Peter. (While there might be some hesitation among biblical scholars about whether the lines can be drawn so surely, Schillebeeckx is a refreshing change from those Catholic systematic theologians who admit in a footnote that scholarship makes some distinctions about Pauline authorship but then go on to treat the Pauline corpus as a whole.) Schillebeeckx studies the different christologies in the Pauline letters as they are related to the grace received by those who believed in Jesus. After Paul, other New Testament works are studied under the same rubric, especially Hebrews and the Johannine Literature (including the Apocalypse). Having studied the books individually, Schillebeeckx does some overall New Testament studies on grace. The last two hundred pages move out of the New Testament to study the experience of suffering and God's salvation in other religions and in the human condition. Fragmentary promises of the last times take various forms in the present world, often non-religious, but the ultimate salvation involves the overcoming of suffering and the bringing about of peace. A short epilogue contains prayers and confessions by Schillebeeckx embodying his conviction that the experience of God should express itself in praise.

In a short review I cannot possibly enter into debate with the thousand specific biblical positions taken by Schillebeeckx in this volume. His range of reading is enormous, and in general he exercises good critical judgment upon that reading. I find too sweeping and simple some of his descriptions of Old Testament thought, and I wince when I see his enthusiasm for a recent article that I disagreed with. Such a reaction, which embarrasses me, reflects the basic problem in the Schillebeeckx christological enterprise. He has learned and appropriated more modern biblical thought than almost any systematic theologian I know; yet in the somewhat snobbish judgment of most biblical scholars Schillebeeckx's many pages on the New Testament will be looked on as a brilliant but not totally successful attempt by an outsider to digest their thoughts. Many of us will wonder whether it was really wise for Schillebeeckx to have attempted by himself such an almost totally biblical approach. He is a systematic theologian with skills that biblical scholars do not possess. While it was necessary for him to understand thoroughly what biblical scholars are about, would he then not have been wiser to work in collaboration with such a scholar and to have given more attention himself to the non-biblical sources? I can only repeat what I said elsewhere about his first volume: he has done the work represented here better than any other single person whom I know could, but was this the best use of his talents in the christological enterprise?

Middle-aged man on the flying trapeze

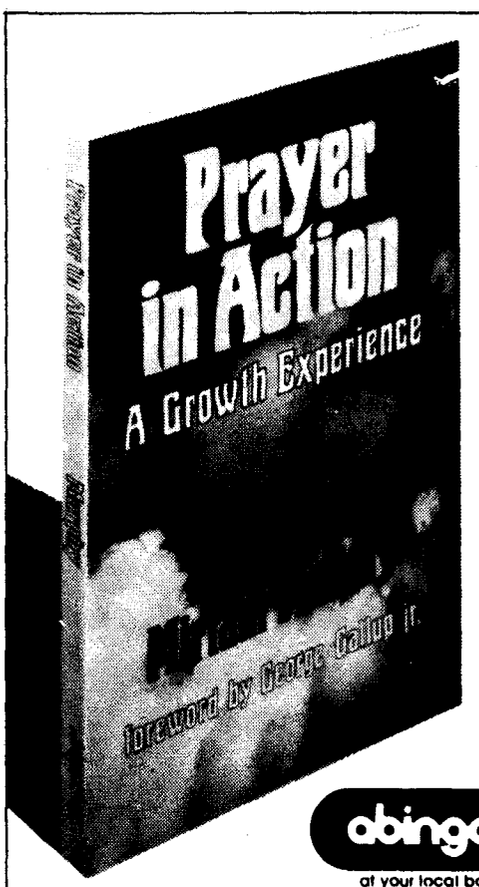
JOSHUA THEN AND NOW

Mordecai Richler

Knopf, $11.95, 435 pp.

Nancy Yanes Hoffman

OUR MIDDLE AGE offends us. We are not better, only older. Our flesh sags and mottles; our spirits slacken and grey. What promises we thought we'd keep, we broke. We've not so many miles to go before we sleep. Middle-aged writers, born with one skin too few, add it all up, wonder who jimmied the calculator: how did they, those wonderful boy wonders, become these Grecian-Formula Men Who Wonder? Jewish writers, having had one skin removed ritually, other skins cauterized socially and economically, seem even more dismayed by age's withering than are the rest of us. If not more dismayed, more aware, more obsessed with recording age's depredations. This past year, Philip Roth's *Ghost Writer*, Bernard Malamud's *Dubin's*



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Lives, Herbert Gold's *He/She*, Mordecai Richler's *Joshua* all compare before and after, "then and now."

In Canadian-writer Richler's eighth novel, Joshua Shapiro, Montreal sportswriter and television star, protests to his father Reuben: "It's absurd. It's f------ ridiculous. I can't be 47 yet. I'm not ready." Joshua never is ready. Only Reuben is a man in this book. Reuben is the father we thought we had or wished we had when we were young, or wished we had now because our fathers couldn't stick around as long as did Reuben. Ex-boxer, ex-bootlegger, often-on-the-lam, Reuben now provides cash, protection, fatherly friendship, grandfatherly companionship, bawdy unprintable instructions, honor, and a kind of dollar-averaging of the Ten Commandments. Richler's Reuben and Joshua are a Canadian-Jewish satire of Hemingway's Tutor-Tyro relationships, complete with personal code. Richler even provides the feckless Joshua with a bucket-shop brother-in-law straight out of Fitzgerald. Kevin's get-rich-quick schemes poison everyone he touches; he's always aiming for the big touch.

Jewish Joshua, son of Reuben, created by Mordecai, is married to Pauline, daughter of a Canadian M.P.—talk about symbolic names! Still playing the overgrown Duddy Kravitz, still blaming the Jewish mother (Joshua's mother is a late-blooming porn film star; now there's a switch!), Richler endows Pauline with all the redemptive *shiksa* virtues. Except. Except that poor Pauline never felt she was good enough, never felt she had rebelled enough, conformed enough, nor won enough battles from her longtime rival Jane.

In Pauline's hospital room in the psychiatric ward, Joshua, guilty, loving, rueful, tries to pep-talk Pauline out of her paralyzing self-doubts by telling her an apocryphal story in his father's manner:

"I asked my father about Tony Vitto. 'What does he do?' 'Well,' my father said, 'Colucci, you know, has his problems. Yeah, with his shoes.' '*His shoes?*' 'Yeah, he gets stones in his shoes, see, and Tony gets them out for him. He has a problem downtown, say, and he shouts at Tony, "*Livarsi na patra di la scarpa* [Take this stone out of my shoe]." And that's what he does.' Well, Jane is the stone in your shoe and I wish I could get her out. Stop seeing her.'"

Which Pauline is unable to do. Either in Westmount, Montreal's well-named Cheever Country, or at Lake Memphremagog, a WASP Waterloo masquerading as a smalltime Riviera, where the playing is another kind of killing. Joshua Now, racked up in an auto accident, his career jeopardized by the publication of an old homosexual correspondence, compares these scurrilous country club sieges with Joshua Then, dreaming of sacrifice in the Spanish Civil War, of fame in London and Paris. Comparisons hurt, but with Reuben at his side, Joshua is bedeviled but undaunted.

Richler is funny, Rabelisian in his humor, his gusto for life, although even his gusto has its ambivalences. But, like most of us in our multiple, pyramiding, parlaying midlife crises, Richler talks too much. His book is overlong, overplotted. He can't resist the one-liner's seductive wink and cock of the head. His ending is hoked-up sentiment.

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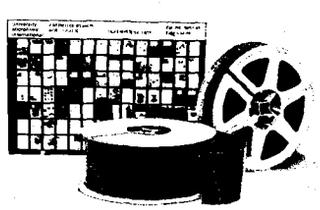

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In Brief

WOMEN AND MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, *by Elizabeth M. Tetlow, Paulist, $6.95, 164 pp.*

The status and role of women in the primitive church become increasingly of interest today. As the old objections to the ordination of women—the argument from creation or nature, the Old Testament tradition—fade into oblivion, precisely how the earliest Christians perceived the example of Jesus and what they themselves practiced are the remaining foci. After all, what once was can again be.

Treading over the same ground again is not necessarily repetitious, as we are all only slowly recognizing and discarding our prejudices; things we missed a few years ago we pick up this time around. In this book Tetlow gives us a good summary of current scholarship plus a few questions that we wish had been asked long ago.

The first two sections of the book are background: the status of women in the ancient world, and religious office and ministry in the Bible. A large amount of material is digested and presented directly and plainly.

In the third section, dealing with the ministry of women as presented in the New Testament, Tetlow comes into her own, questioning, analyzing, interpreting. Mary of Magdala, she argues, clearly meets the biblical criteria for apostleship and with her witness "I have seen the Lord" becomes the first apostle. The biblical texts, she shows, suggest that disciples beyond the Twelve were

REVIEWERS

ROBERT HOWARD, *is the Washington bureau chief of* In These Times.

FATHER RAYMOND E. BROWN, S.S., *is the author of* The Community of the Beloved Disciple *(Paulist)*.

NANCY YANES HOFFMAN *is associate professor of English at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York.*

ARLENE SWIDLER *is the author of* Woman in a Man's Church *(Paulist)*.

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present at the Last Supper; why should we assume women were excluded? And why has it always been assumed that the unnamed "beloved disciple" was a man?

Questions still remain, of course. Our author, for example, states flatly that "all of the New Testament writers were men of the first century," ignoring the theory going back to Von Harnack that Priscilla was the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. There must be other books later, but this is a good step forward.

ARLENE SWIDLER

Correspondence

(Continued from page

As I read Dr. Friedman (more than many businessmen, certainly less than Professor Sowell) he would have more compassion for the men on Chrysler assembly lines than for the businessmen involved. I am not sure that the same could be said of Mrs. Thatcher or General Pinochet. JORDAN BISHOP

Chicago boys, no

Daytona Beach, Fla.

To the Editors: Twice recently I have read Thomas Sowell reacting to criticism of conservative economics. The latest [*Commonweal*, Sept. 12] exemplifies the reasons why this kind of economics is unacceptable on philosophical and moral grounds.

At base, as Michael Harrington pointed out on an episode of the "Free to Choose" television series, it is an ideology masquerading as a science, using culturally celebrated words like "free enterprise" and "free market" as a smokescreen for the prevailing economic system of corporate capitalism (just as Soviet socialism does for state capitalism). As for Professor Sowell never hearing businessmen praised at the University of Chicago—this has not interrupted the flow of funds from businessmen to the "Chicago boys," here and abroad.

More to the point, conservative economics is mechanistic and amoral. It elevates a secondary moral principle—freedom to buy and sell; obfuscates the distinction between this particular and very limited definition of freedom, and the much more important freedoms—from hunger, oppression, injustice, for human development, common use of the goods of creation, justice and peace; and, in the name of value—free (and ultimately value-less) social science, gives free rein to those who profit from the secondary freedom at the expense of the principal freedoms (e.g. Chile, where "Chicago boys" are running the economy).

Finally, the tradition of Catholic social teaching, based on a long acquaintance with the "nature of man," and the "limitations of his knowledge and morality," long ago pointed to an essential defense of the nature and freedom of man in economic affairs which conservative economics denies and would like to eliminate—labor unions. The same tradition maintains the primacy of political action and decision-making, to supervise the workings of any economic system so that the prior human rights and needs of individuals and societies can be protected and fostered. Conservative economics seeks to remove such supervision and protection.

No, Professor Sowell, we don't need Galbraith or Veblen; Leo XIII or Paul VI are enough to warn us off your kind of economics. MICHAEL O'NEILL

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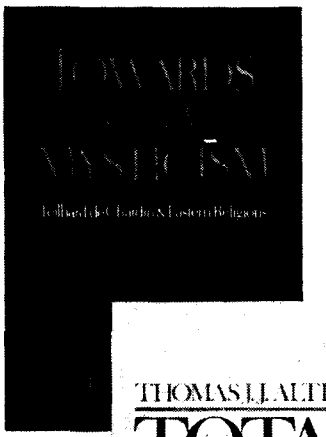

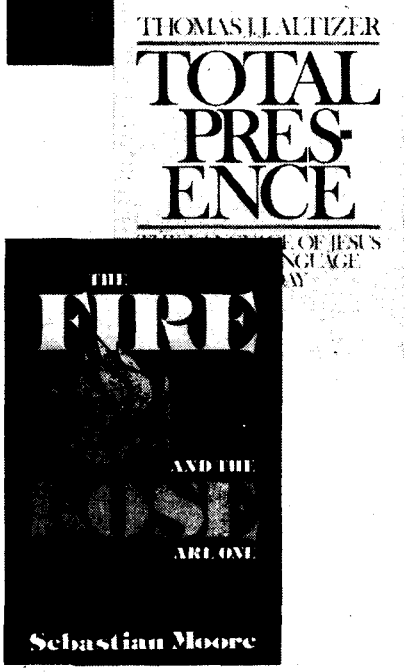

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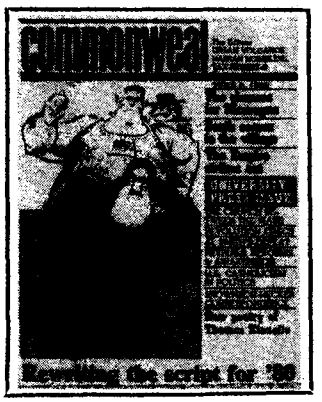

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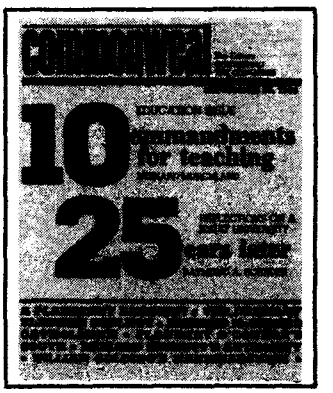

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